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US speeds up timetable for chip-export curbs on China

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## CHINA DAILY

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President Xi Jinping shakes hands with Gavin Newsom, governor of the US state of California, at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Wednesday. HUANG JINGWEN / XINHUA

## Xi: Pooling strength will boost Sino-US relations

Outcomes of bilateral cooperation should be cherished, president says

By XU WEI  
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President Xi Jinping met with the governor of the US state of California and extended a letter to the Gala Dinner of the National Committee on US-China Relations on Wednesday to reaffirm Beijing's commitment to stronger bilateral ties amid growing diplomatic engagements between the two countries.

Analysts said Beijing's emphasis on ties with Washington shows

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that the momentum of high-level contacts as well as people-to-people exchanges continues to build.

While meeting with Governor Gavin Newsom, Xi underlined China's long-standing United States policy — adhering to mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation. China will continue to work in this direction and hopes that the US will meet China halfway, he said.

Xi noted that China and the US, as the world's two largest economies, account for over one-third of the global economy, with a combined population of one-fourth of the world, and bilateral trade represents about one-fifth of the world's total.

The interests of both nations are closely knitted together, and the two sides have come a long way in securing outcomes in bilateral relations, which should be "dearly cherished", he said.

Newsom is making a seven-day

trip to China that started on Monday, focusing on climate action and partnership between China and the US.

Xi recalled his previous visit to California and introduced the governor to China's green transition efforts and development at local levels.

It is necessary to gather the strength of all parties to advance China-US ties, he said, adding that the foundation of the relationship lies in the people, the hope for the two countries' future lies with youth, and the vitality comes from local cooperation.

Xi said that he highly values and supports exchanges across various sectors and local cooperation between the two countries, and expressed hope that Newsom's visit can enhance mutual understanding and help expand cooperation between China and California, as well as promote the healthy and stable development of China-US relations.

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## China, Colombia upgrade ties to strategic partnership

By CAO DESHENG  
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China and Colombia elevated their relations to a strategic partnership on Wednesday as the two countries vowed to deepen bilateral cooperation and contribute to world peace and development.

President Xi Jinping and visiting Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced the upgrading of the countries' ties during their meeting in Beijing. Petro started a three-day state visit to China on Tuesday, his first to the country since taking office last year.

During the meeting, Xi hailed China-Colombia ties, saying that bilateral relations have withstood the tests of international changes and maintained a good momentum of development.

The two sides understand and support each other on issues concerning their respective core interests and major concerns, and cooperation in various fields has been solidly promoted and the two peoples' friendship has been strengthened, Xi said.

The establishment of a strategic partnership between China and Colombia is the result of long-term efforts by people from all walks of life in both countries, as well as an embodiment of mutual trust and win-win cooperation, he said, adding that the partnership needs to be cherished and continuously enhanced by both sides.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, China was the first country to send vaccines to Colombia. In 2021, in recognition of China's help in fighting the pandemic, Xi was invited to give a speech, via video link, to the people of Colombia.

Chinese imports from Colombia have risen significantly in the last few years, with China becoming the South American nation's second-biggest trading partner after the United States. In 2022, bilateral trade in goods amounted to \$22.6 billion, up 13.4 percent year-on-year.

While briefing Petro about China's modernization process, Xi emphasized that China supports Colombia's independent exploration of a development path that suits its national conditions and also supports the country's peace process.

He said that China's high-quality development and modernization will bring new development opportunities to Colombia and other countries.

Noting that China-Colombia relations are based on equality, mutual benefit and win-win outcomes, Xi said the nation welcomes Colombia to participate in the joint building of the Belt and Road to achieve common development and prosperity.

He called on both countries to strive to optimize their bilateral trade structure and strengthen cooperation in areas such as information communications and the digital economy. China encourages more high-quality Colombian products to enter its vast market, and welcomes Colombia to join the China-initiated Global Clean Energy Cooperation Partnership and share opportunities for green development, he added.

Xi noted that China and Colombia, both being developing countries, should strengthen communication and cooperation in international affairs, and safeguard the common interests of developing countries and international fairness and justice.

He congratulated Colombia on assuming the rotating presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in 2025, and said China attaches great importance to the development of Sino-Latin American relations.

Petro said that he highly values the Belt and Road Initiative, and Colombia wants to align its geographical advantages and development strategy with the BRI, strengthen cooperation with China in infrastructure, clean energy and other fields, and welcomes Chinese companies to invest in the country.

Colombia is ready to maintain communication with China on the Palestine-Israel situation and promote a solution to de-escalate the conflict, he said.

After the talks, the two leaders witnessed the signing of multiple bilateral cooperation documents in various areas, including industrial investment, trade, green development, agriculture, science and technology, education and culture.

## Climate efforts enable Africa to transform into global green hub

The Africa Climate Summit, convened by the African Union and hosted by Kenya, has elicited the "African Renaissance" dream.

This unity of purpose through the summit, held in Nairobi from Sept 4 to 6, culminated with the unveiling of "The African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change", which will galvanize Africa to speak with one voice on matters of green- ing the continent's industrial development and decarbonizing the global economy.

As the least emitter of greenhouse

gases, the continent of Africa has been hard hit by the consequences of climate change in recent decades at an unprecedented scale, due to poor climate adaptation and mitigation financing. Undeniably, the impacts of climate change have been described as the greatest existential threat not only to Africa but to the whole of humanity. This is shown in the Global Climate Report 2022 released by the World Meteorological Organization.

The report said that more than 110 million people across Africa

## WORLD WATCH

By Dennis Munene

suffered the direct effects of climate change last year. This resulted in about 5,000 deaths, largely through drought and flooding.

Regarding the economy, cases related to climate change caused damage of more than \$8.5 billion. Food security has also been affected, with the growth of the continent's

agricultural productivity having declined by 34 percent since 1961 due to climate change. The statistics continue to increase each day as leaders, policymakers and other stakeholders in both the Global North and Global South continue with accusations about who is the greatest emitter of greenhouse gases. Thus, the essence of the communique from the Africa Climate Summit is that we all need to shift our climate change policies from commitments to actions.

Furthermore, borrowing from

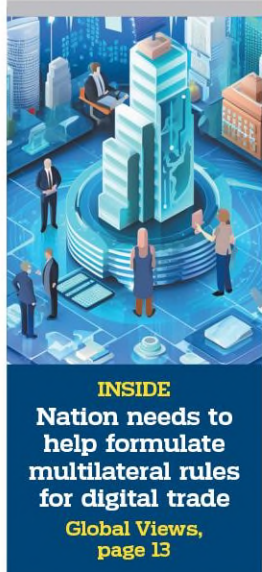
President Xi Jinping's quest for a just ecological civilization that is more action-oriented, the Africa Climate Summit also focused on delivering climate-positive growth and finance solutions for Africa and the world.

Thus, to reconcile the African Union's Agenda 2063 with green industrialization, the continent needs to embrace several strategies.

First, moving from commitment to action is needed. Africa must unlock its rich natural resources to develop renewable energy. As

observed during the climate summit, Africa is the continent with 60 percent of the world's renewable energy assets, including solar, geothermal, wind and hydropower. In addition, the continent's infrastructure for capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide is the largest in the world. By contrast, Africa's fossil fuels account for 91.5 percent of energy consumption. Thus, to reverse the negative impacts of fossil fuels in Africa, the continent must increase its renewable energy capacity from the current 56 gigawatts to at least 300 GW by 2030.

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Nation needs to help formulate multilateral rules for digital trade  
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## MODERN TOUCHES HELP SAFEGUARD SUZHOU'S HERITAGE

Precious treasures preserved, ancient properties restored

By CANG WEI in Suzhou, Jiangsu  
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The city of Suzhou in Jiangsu province has long been a dream destination for lovers of Chinese history and culture.

Dating back some 2,500 years, the city evokes a sense of elegance and charm with its picturesque canals, traditional gardens and ancient streets.



Suzhou is home to numerous alleyways and old houses, with its graceful willow trees bringing a sense of calm to visitors and residents.

At the heart of the city lies Pingjiang Road. Situated in Gusu district, the thoroughfare is a living

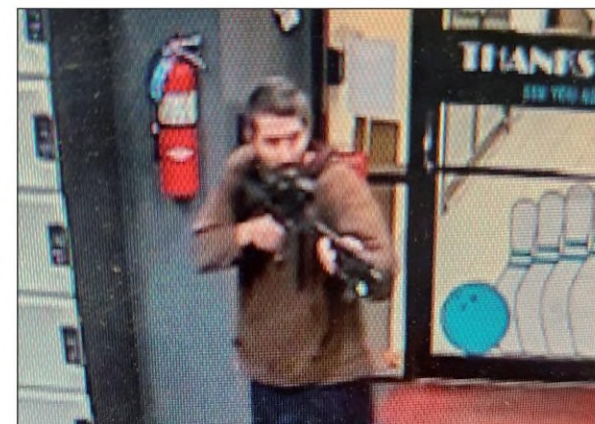
testament to a glorious past and thriving future.

The road is located alongside the Pingjiang River, and the Pingjiang Road Historical Block is the city's best-preserved area.

The road's layout has basically remained unchanged since the days of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and the Song Dynasty (960-1279).

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## Mass shooting in Maine



A man identified as a suspect by police in a mass shooting in which 22 people were reported killed and dozens injured appears to be holding a semiautomatic rifle in Lewiston, Maine, on Wednesday. REUTERS

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Suzhou: Residents welcome changes

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President Xi Jinping emphasized during his visit to Jiangsu in July that Pingjiang Road is a precious treasure for the inheritance and promotion of traditional Chinese culture, and the road should be used well and protected.

It is not only important to inherit the road in material forms, but also in people's hearts, he said.

The authorities in Suzhou have invested heavily to preserve the city's ancient architecture, customs and fascinating stories that have emerged through the ages. Pingjiang Road stands as a shining example of the city's commitment to such efforts.

In March 2019, the first phase of the Suzhou Ancient City Revival Architectural Design Workshop, jointly organized by the Suzhou Municipal People's Government and the China Architecture Society, officially started.

No. 30 Jianxin Lane was selected for a research project. By using a strategy of "preserving the old while introducing the new", fresh technologies were applied to old properties in the lane, and traditional garden aesthetics were integrated with future lifestyles, providing new methods to revive the ancient city.

However, as the protection work gradually progressed, problems arose, with urban renewal and protection of the ancient city becoming an extremely complex project.

The Leading Group for the Protection of Suzhou National Historical and Cultural City was formed in April last year to efficiently coordinate and resolve various issues regarding protection work in the city. The group is headed by the main leaders of the municipal Party committee and the municipal government.

Fang Wenbang, Gusu district chief, who also heads the Suzhou National Historical and Cultural City Conservation Zone's Party Working Committee, said: "In the past, we vigor-

ously developed the new city while protecting the ancient one, laying the foundation for Suzhou's integration of old and new. We now need to promote the conservation of the ancient city from a higher perspective and with a broader vision."

Repairs underway

Repair work began this month on many old houses in Suzhou, using original materials and craftsmanship. Flowers and plants have been transplanted, and rockeries and ponds reconfigured in courtyards and gardens.

Toilets have been renovated, streets and alleyways beautified, a new sewage system built, and local households now boast tap water, flush toilets and internet access.

These significant improvements have been welcomed by residents who have long lived on Pingjiang Road.

Jiang Qing, who has lived on the road for more than 30 years, said: "Many of my relatives now want to spend their holidays at my house. They prefer it to the numerous five-star hotels in Suzhou."

"Life was very different before the government began to make improvements to the environment. My relatives even refused to eat at my home, because they thought the nearby river was smelly. Mosquitoes were also everywhere."

To better restore and protect the road, the authorities in Gusu implemented the Ancient City Cellular Anatomy Project in 2020, conducting in-depth investigations in the 54 neighborhoods of the ancient city, which cover an area of 14.2 square kilometers.

The project, a finely detailed conservation initiative, was launched by the Suzhou National Historical and Cultural City Conservation Zone and Gusu district. It is the first



Tourists admire Lion Grove Garden in Suzhou. DU LIANYI / CHINA DAILY

By adhering to the philosophy of 'use is the best protection', Suzhou is striving to expedite the revitalization and use of its ancient buildings and old houses."

Fang Wenbang, Gusu district chief

of its kind among the 140 historical and culturally renowned cities in China.

Traditional residential and other structures feature in the project, as well as additional elements, forming the "basic cells" that constitute the ancient city's framework.

A comprehensive survey is being conducted to cover all aspects of the ancient city's neighborhoods and protect historical remains. A digital image of the old city is being created by using collected data and digital technology.

The image will feature more than 4,000 protected objects in 18 categories throughout Gusu. A Digital City Operation and Management Center will also be established to enhance management efficiency by using

artificial intelligence.

This year's meetings of the city's legislature and political advisory body, which are known as Suzhou's two sessions, set a goal for renovation work on 50 old residential communities to be completed before the end of December.

During the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period, Suzhou aims to renovate 347 old residential communities, benefiting 107,000 households.

The city is exploring a new approach of "development in conservation, and conservation in development".

Preserving and renovating ancient houses brings new vitality to these properties through the introduction of fresh business formats, ensuring that inheritance and action

go hand in hand, and striking the best balance between preservation and use.

Fang, the district chief, said this is the only way in which these ancient houses "truly come to life".

As the first, and currently the only, national historical and cultural city conservation zone in China, Gusu will further innovate conservation, Fang added.

"By adhering to the philosophy of 'use is the best protection', Suzhou is striving to expedite the revitalization and use of its ancient buildings and old houses. This initiative features not only government leadership and participation from State-owned enterprises, but also the increasing involvement of market entities and social capital," Fang said.

Numerous attractions

Visitors to Pingjiang Road pose for photographs while wearing traditional *hanfu* costumes, eat time-honored dim sum, create ancient Chinese New Year prints, and enjoy the Suzhou Pingtan art form while drinking tea. There is even a Starbucks outlet on the ancient street.

At Cat's Sky City store on Pingjiang Road, Qiao Lanrong teaches visitors to make Taohuawu Woodblock New Year Prints, and will frame the prints if they want to take them home.

Originating in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and flourishing in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), these prints were dubbed the "Flower of the Eastern Ancient Art". In 2006, the prints were included in the first batch of items on China's national intangible cultural heritage representative list.

Qiao, who has been studying such prints for more than 20 years and is a representative inheritor of the art form, said, "I'm glad to have the opportuni-

ty to introduce domestic and foreign visitors to these beautiful prints."

Suzhou has six world-class intangible cultural heritage projects and 32 such projects at national level with 50 inheritors. At provincial level, there are 124 intangible cultural heritage projects with 94 inheritors.

Data from the Suzhou Municipal Political Consultative Conference show there are 159 intangible cultural heritage projects at municipal level with 334 inheritors, and 528 representative projects at county level with 536 inheritors. Many of the inheritors have been consulted about protection of the ancient city.

As of this year, Suzhou had produced five versions of the protection plan for historical and cultural cities, completed the plan to protect historical and cultural blocks, and the control plan for ancient city neighborhoods.

The city has also introduced some 50 local rules and documents to establish a comprehensive system for legal regulations.

Zhu Yidong, director of the Ancient City Conservation Commission in Gusu, said the introduction of social capital is important to inject vitality into protecting the ancient city.

"We will conduct inspections regularly to ensure the necessary protection measures are in place, leaving no room for negligence," Zhu said.

A total of 438 buildings and 1,141 cultural relics have been preserved in Gusu. As witnesses to Suzhou's historical and cultural heritage, these ancient properties are a microcosm of the city's history.

The protection of Pingjiang Road is just one example of the efforts being made in Suzhou to restore the city's ancient treasures.

Fang, the district chief, said the authorities in Gusu will strive to achieve better results through government-led, market-based and multiparty participation, and make contributions to the world by protecting the ancient city.



Pingjiang Road and the Suzhou Museum are among the attractions in the 2,500-year-old city. PHOTOS BY ZHOU LIANG AND WANG JIANZHONG / FOR CHINA DAILY, AND PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY



# TOP NEWS

## Li calls for advancing ties with Kyrgyzstan

By MO JINGXI  
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China and Kyrgyzstan agreed on Wednesday to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, enhance connectivity by accelerating the construction of key projects including the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway and expand cooperation in all areas in order to bring more benefits to their peoples.

The two countries signed multiple bilateral cooperation documents on adjacent-area cooperation, the digital economy, local friendly exchanges and infrastructure after the talks between Premier Li Qiang and Kyrgyz Prime Minister Akybek Japarov.

The leaders also jointly unveiled the plaque for a China Cultural Center in Bishkek, the first of its kind in the Central Asian region.

Li is in Kyrgyzstan on an official visit. He will attend the 22nd Meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member states in Bishkek.

During the talks, Li underlined the need for the two countries to implement their mid- to long-term economic and trade cooperation plan and expand cooperation in emerging industries.

Li expressed China's willingness to strengthen coordination in multi-lateral affairs with Kyrgyzstan, build a closer China-Central Asia community with a shared future and carry forward the "Shanghai spirit" under the SCO framework.

The Kyrgyz prime minister said the Kyrgyzstan-China relationship has reached its highest level in history since the two nations elevated their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era during Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov's visit to China in May.

The Kyrgyz prime minister expressed his country's firm support for China on issues related to the Taiwan question, the Xinjiang Uygur and Tibet autonomous regions and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and other issues concerning Beijing's core interests.

Kyrgyzstan is ready to deepen its Belt and Road cooperation with China, boost connectivity and expand partnership in economy and trade, tourism, education and other areas, he said.

When meeting with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov on the same day, Li said that China is willing to work with the Central Asian nation to fully implement the important consensus reached by the two heads of state in May, promote greater bilateral cooperation and build a stronger, more dynamic China-Kyrgyzstan community with a shared future.

Li said the two countries should complement each other with their industrial strengths, expand the scope and scale of economic and trade cooperation, and maintain stability in industrial and supply chains.

## Cyclone aftermath



A man inspects his damaged home in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, after Cyclone Harnoon made landfall in the coastal district on Wednesday. Nearly 275,000 people fled to shelters as the tropical storm barreled into the South Asian nation, killing at least two people. TANBIR MIRAJ / AFP

## Relations: Experts urge concerted efforts

From page 1

There is enormous potential for cooperation between China and the US in areas such as green development and climate change, and both sides can strengthen such cooperation and make it a new highlight in the development of Sino-US relations, Xi said.

Newsom, making the first trip to China by a US governor since COVID-19, told Xi that there is no other bilateral relationship in the world as important as the one between the US and China.

He expressed support for Xi's principles for the development of US-China relations, and underscored his readiness to promote California's engagement and exchanges with China in the same spirit, fostering closer collaboration in areas such as climate change and new energy.

Diao Daming, a professor at Renmin University of China's School of International Studies, said Newsom's visit "highlights the strong and positive desire of US states and local communities to strengthen cooperation and achieve mutual benefits in areas such as trade, tourism, culture and climate change."

His visit will set a positive example to encourage more US states and local communities to engage with China, enhance exchanges and promote cooperation, Diao said.

The meeting came after President Xi received US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in June and a bipartisan US Senate delegation earlier this month. Xi also replied to three letters from friendly US citizens in the past three months to promote and build lasting bonds between the two peoples.

In his congratulatory message to the annual Gala Dinner of the National Committee on US-China Relations, Xi also stressed Beijing's readiness to work with Washington to contribute to each other's progress and push for common prosperity.

Whether the two major countries can find the right path of state-to-state interactions has a bearing on world peace and development, as well as the future of mankind, he said.

Based on the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, China is willing to work with the US to advance mutually beneficial cooperation, properly manage differences

and make joint efforts to tackle global challenges, Xi said.

US President Joe Biden said in a letter to the Gala Dinner that both the US and China have a duty to address transnational challenges that affect the lives of the people of both countries. Biden said his administration is committed to maintaining cooperation with China "on issues where progress hinges on our common efforts".

Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger, who was honored with an accolade at the gala, said he is convinced that a peaceful and cooperative relationship between the two countries is "essential for peace and progress in the world".

"I am confident that all of you here agree that peace and progress between China and the United States is in the self-interest of each country, and in the interest of the world," said Kissinger, who is 100.

Xie Tao, dean of Beijing Foreign Studies University's School of International Relations and Diplomacy, said China has showed its sincerity in developing ties with the US, and "now it is important for Washington to meet Beijing halfway and make concerted efforts to promote mutual understanding and exchanges".

## Treasury bonds to consolidate recovery trend

Banks may be allowed to set aside less as reserves to release more liquidity into system

By OUYANG SHIJIA  
and LIU ZHIHUA

China's decision to issue 1 trillion yuan (\$137 billion) of treasury bonds during the fourth quarter will help boost market confidence and further consolidate the foundation for economic recovery, marking the country's latest step to stimulate the world's second-largest economy, officials and experts said on Wednesday.

Experts said the new move highlighted the country's resolve to stabilize growth, suggesting that China will likely make its policies more expansionary next year with an anticipated annual growth target of around 5 percent for 2024, which is the same as this year's.

Looking into the remainder of this year, they said they expect the People's Bank of China, the country's central bank, to further lower the amount of deposits banks need to set aside as reserves, which will release more liquidity into the nation's financial system.

Zhu Zhongming, vice-minister of finance, said the funds raised will be used to support the rebuilding of disaster-hit areas and construction projects to boost China's ability to withstand disasters.

He told a news briefing in Beijing on Wednesday that the move will not only help address the weak links and enhance livelihoods, but it will also boost domestic demand and further consolidate the recovery trend.

Zhu said the move will expand China's fiscal deficit from 3 percent to around 3.8 percent for the year.

According to the plan approved by the country's top legislature on Tuesday, all bond proceeds will be allocated to local regions, via the transfer payment mechanism.

Around 500 billion yuan is planned to be utilized within the year, while the remaining half-trillion yuan will be used next year.

"It is anticipated that the additional bond issuance will provide

further support for the broad fixed-asset investment and economic expansion in the fourth quarter and the following year. Moreover, earmarking the funds will, to some extent, alleviate the regional imbalance in infrastructure investment in China," said Zhou Wenyu, associate director of corporates at Fitch Bohua, a ratings agency.

Latest data from the Ministry of Finance showed the expenditures in the national general public budget grew by 3.9 percent year-on-year in the first nine months of the year, while government-managed fund expenditures experienced a 17.3 percent year-on-year decrease during the same period.

The measures to increase leverage by issuing additional treasury bonds and transferring all their proceeds to local governments will help alleviate the expenditure pressure on local governments and optimize the structure of fiscal spending and debt, Zhou said.

Xiong Yuan, chief economist at Guosheng Securities, said the additional fiscal support aims to stabilize growth and boost confidence, and the widened budget deficit signals China's pro-growth stance.

Xiong's views were echoed by Feng Jianlin, chief economist at Beijing FOST Economic Consulting Co, who said the new move will help stabilize the economy at the beginning of next year, estimating the country will set its 2024 GDP growth target at around 5 percent.

To ease liquidity pressures, another cut in the reserve requirement ratio may be possible in the current quarter, Feng said.

Justin Yifu Lin, dean of the Institute of New Structural Economics at Peking University, said that China still has large scope for fiscal expansion in order to adopt countercyclical measures and add steam to the economy.

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## Climate: Partnerships to help power Africa's green industrial development

From page 1

Second, sustainable green financing must be secured. Africa still faces the challenge of securing the scale of financing needed to unlock its green growth. For instance, according to the "State of the Climate in Africa Report 2022" by the World Meteorological Organization, the continent needs about \$2.8 trillion between 2020 and 2030 to finance African countries' nationally determined contributions.

Thus, the Africa Climate Summit called upon the world's biggest emitters of greenhouse gases and richest countries to keep their promises — noting, in particular, an unfulfilled pledge of \$100 billion in annual climate financing to developing nations, made years ago. The unfulfilled promises have been the biggest impediment to the fight against climate change and the development of sustainable renewable energy. Yet developed countries have been pushing

developing countries to industrialize without the use of fossil energy.

Third, the power of partnerships must be embraced. The level of green development taking place on the continent through the power of partnership is unparalleled. The African Development Bank, the largest crusader for partnership, is committed to providing \$25 billion for climate financing by 2025. Additionally, in transforming the continent into the world's green hub, the African

Development Bank is implementing a \$20 billion initiative, Desert to Power, to harness solar power and deliver electricity to 250 million people. This will help power the continent for green industrial growth and development.

Last but not least, the rising pan-African era needs to be utilized. The African Union has become a permanent member of the G20, and with the increase of African voices in the global multilateral system, the continent must develop its own

carbon markets, price its carbon accurately, and harvest its vast mineral wealth to accelerate its green growth. Thus, tapping into Africa's rich natural resources will be the sharpest weapon for decarbonizing the continent and transforming it into the world's green hub.

The author is executive director of the China-Africa Center at the Kenya-based Africa Policy Institute. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.

## Shenzhou XVII mission to focus on space debris

By ZHAO LEI  
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China will launch its 12th manned spaceflight, the Shenzhou XVII, on Thursday morning to transport a three-member crew to the Tiangong space station, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

The spacecraft — with mission commander Senior Colonel Tang Hongbo, Lieutenant Colonel Tang Shengjie and Lieutenant Colonel Jiang Xinlin on board — is scheduled to be lifted by a Long March 2F carrier rocket at 11:14 am from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwestern China's Gobi Desert, said Lin Xiqiang, deputy director of the space agency, at a news conference on Wednesday.

"After the Shenzhou XVII spacecraft enters its preset orbital position, it will activate the rapid rendezvous-docking mode and take about six and a half hours to approach and connect with the front port of the Tianhe core module," Lin said.

The Tiangong space station, orbiting about 400 kilometers above Earth, has three major components — the Tianhe core module and the

Wentian and Mengtian science lab modules. It is currently connected with visiting Shenzhou XVI crew ship and the Tianzhou 6 cargo ship, and is one of the largest and most sophisticated spacecraft ever placed in orbit.

The Shenzhou XVII team will take over Tiangong from the Shenzhou XVI crew, comprising mission commander Major General Jing Haipeng, Colonel Zhu Yangzhu and Professor Gui Haichao, who arrived at the space station on May 30. The two teams will be stationed together for about four days for handover work, after which the Shenzhou XVI crew will fly back to Earth.

The Shenzhou XVII astronauts are scheduled to stay inside Tiangong for around six months and return to Earth around April. Their tasks will include carrying out scientific experiments and technological demonstrations, conducting spacewalks to install equipment and maintain the massive orbital outpost, checking the space station's operational performance and obtaining relevant data, and helping to review the support capabilities of ground facilities, Lin said.

In addition to these routine tasks, there will be a new assignment for

the Shenzhou XVII crew members — they will perform experimental repairing operations during spacewalks, the official said.

"As the amount of space debris keeps rising, it is inevitable for any long-working space station to be hit by small or micro debris. We have found that the solar arrays on Tiangong have been slightly damaged by debris," he said.

Lin said that such scenario was taken into account when plans for experimental repairing operations were made, and the space station is still in good condition.

"However, to ensure Tiangong's long-term operation and to verify our technical capabilities, we have arranged the Shenzhou XVII crew to make experimental repairing operations during their extravehicular activities, which will be very challenging," he added.

If such experimental maneuvers are successful, they will mark a significant advance in China's capability to make and support spacewalk, Lin added.

Tang, the Shenzhou XVII mission commander, is one of the nation's second-generation astronauts. He is set to become the first Chinese astronaut

making two spaceflights within the shortest interval. Tang's first space journey was on board the three-month-long Shenzhou XII mission, which concluded two years and one month ago. He will also be the first astronaut to return to Tiangong.

Tang Shengjie and Jiang are among China's third-generation astronauts and the Shenzhou XVII mission will be their first journey to the Earth's orbit. With an average age of 38, the three-member team will be the youngest Chinese crew in space.

### Program for peace

Speaking about the next steps in the Tiangong program, Lin said that China will deploy a large space telescope in the near future to fly alongside the space station, and it also plans to launch more science modules to connect with the station.

China is open to international cooperation and communication in regard with the space station, ranging from joint flights to payload development, Lin said.

"We would like to invite all countries and regions dedicated to the peaceful use of outer space to work with us in the Tiangong program," he said, adding that the country



Crew members of Shenzhou XVII — mission commander Senior Colonel Tang Hongbo (center), Lieutenant Colonel Jiang Xinlin (left) and Lieutenant Colonel Tang Shengjie — meet with the media at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on Wednesday. ZHU XINGXIN / CHINA DAILY

will also invite foreign astronauts to take part in its manned lunar expeditions.

China's manned space program has been of a peaceful nature since its very first day and China has never sought "space hegemony", according to Lin.

He said the country's manned space program is an important part of mankind's exploration and use of outer space, and is totally intended for peaceful purposes.

"Our projects are meant to enrich human knowledge about the universe, expand the range of human presence and activities, and push forward the sustainable development of civilizations," he said.

Lin made the remarks when responding to a question on whether China plans to contest for "space hegemony" with the United States as the US-led International Space Station is expected to retire around 2030.



## CHINA

## Xinjiang skier has slopes stardom in his sights

URUMQI — Despite only having two years of experience on the snow, Aybek Caoletibek has already earned numerous accolades.

Specializing in cross-country skiing, the 13-year-old secured the top spot in Group B at the inaugural youth competition during the Winter Games in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region earlier this year.

"My physical fitness and skills are excellent," he proudly stated.

It was his exceptional physical condition and dedicated work ethic that caught the attention of Yerlebek Muratkhan, a coach at the Burqin County Amateur Sports School in Altay prefecture, situated in the remote northwestern corner of China.

Aybek's hometown, nestled at the foot of the Altay Mountains, is a considerable distance from Burqin. To enhance his skills, the boy crafted a pair of wooden skis at home and practiced on his own, in addition to his daily training at school during the winter.

"I train every day. When my friends see it, they are curious, and I tell them skiing is my passion," the Kazakh teenager said.

Yerlebek is clearly impressed.

"He's a promising talent and also possesses the potential to become an outstanding athlete," the coach remarked.

Inspired by the Beijing Olympic Winter Games, the prefecture, blessed with abundant ice and snow resources, has intensified its efforts to construct facilities, accelerating the popularization and promotion of winter sports. There are now four sizable professional skiing resorts in Altay, and each county or city has established at least four ice rinks.

"The equipment is not cheap, but the local government provides us with support, and children don't have to spend a penny," Yerlebek said.

Aybek has had ample opportunities to compete from a young age, covering various locations in just two years across Xinjiang, and he has honed his skills rapidly by competing in different events.

"The competitors are all strong, and through these

matches, I can identify my weaknesses and focus on improving myself during training," Aybek said.

The progress of Aybek and his friends has also attracted attention from professionals.

Jilin province, renowned for its extensive winter sports culture, has leveraged its strengths to collaborate with Altay in supporting Xinjiang. The province continuously sends national-level coaches to assist in local talent development every year.

Earlier this year, national cross-country skiing champion Lin Guanghao visited Altay to demonstrate technical skills and offer training advice to locals.

Aybek trained four hours every day alongside Lin.

"Techniques are constantly evolving. I hope to enhance the professionalism of local coaches and athletes through my efforts," Lin said.

The right sporting philosophy also plays a pivotal role.

Li Yanhu, an expert in sports and health research, gave a lecture titled "Spinal Health and Sports" to young people in a sports community activity held in Burqin.

Li said that coaches and children need to grasp scientific sports and protection methods to better develop themselves. "Winter sports are both intense and risky, and some even challenge their own limits. Therefore, learning how to protect themselves is essential," Li said.

During the Beijing Winter Olympics, Aybek closely followed the cross-country skiing competitions on TV every day. He views Dinigeer Yilamujiang, a skier from Altay who was one of the two torchbearers at the Games' opening ceremony, as his role model and hopes to represent China at the Olympics someday.

Aybek has gained a clearer understanding of his path to pursuing his dreams.

"Physical health comes first. By maintaining good health and adhering to scientific training, I believe that one day, I will achieve my dream," he said.

XINHUA



From top: Enthusiasts visit the Keketuohai International Ski Resort in Altay prefecture, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, in April. There are now four sizable professional skiing resorts in Altay. PHOTOS BY HU HUIHU / XINHUA



Clockwise from top: Colleagues greet nurse Gan Xiuni at the Second Affiliated Hospital of Chongqing Medical University as she returns from an award ceremony in Beijing, at which she was awarded a Florence Nightingale Medal. Gan takes care of a patient who was injured during the earthquake in Wenchuan, Sichuan province, in 2008. Gan checks on a patient in an intensive care unit of the Chongqing hospital during the COVID-19 pandemic. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

## Dedicated nurse thrives on several front lines

Florence Nightingale Medal winner recognized for work on humanitarian missions, advancing colleagues' career paths

By TAN YINGZI and DENG RUI in Chongqing

From working on the front line during the Wenchuan earthquake to battling two of the most dangerous viruses the world has seen, "Mother Gan" has maintained an equanimity that has rallied both her patients and colleagues.

Earlier this year, 59-year-old Gan Xiuni, head of the nursing department of the Second Affiliated Hospital of Chongqing Medical University, was announced as one of the recipients of this year's Florence Nightingale Medal.

The honor is presented biennially to nurses who show exceptional courage and devotion to caring for people during conflict or disaster, or who demonstrate a pioneering spirit in the areas of public health or nursing education.

Fittingly, during her 41 years of nursing Gan has achieved all of these feats.

On Sept 5, a ceremony and seminar were held in Beijing to commemorate the seven Chinese recipients of the Florence Nightingale Medal, including Gan.

"To me, the Florence Nightingale spirit is to show empathy, to dedicate oneself wholeheartedly and to shoulder responsibility," Gan said at her welcoming ceremony at Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport when she returned home that night.

On the clinical front line, she has worked in emergency departments, operating rooms and ophthalmology and otolaryngology departments over the decades.

Gan has also served on many humanitarian aid missions, including the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, the 2003 SARS outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic.

When an 8.0-magnitude earthquake hit Sichuan 15 years ago, Gan was among the first to arrive in the southwestern province with the national earthquake relief medical team. For seven days, she worked nonstop, treating more than 80 critically injured patients and coordinating and organizing the transport of 90 others to Chongqing for surgery. "Mother Gan changed my destiny," said 32-year-old Zhang Haiyan, adding that Gan also helped her cope with the trauma of the earthquake.

In 2008, Zhang, then a teenager, lost her relatives and left leg when the earthquake struck her hometown Deyang, one of the hardest-hit areas in Sichuan.

"When I was desperate, it was Mother Gan who took good care of my wound, offered me food and cheered me up," she said.

When SARS broke out in 2003, Gan went to the front line and helped prepare for the construction of a hospital isolation ward.

In 2020, Gan was given the Chinese government's highest award, national model worker, for her efforts in fighting the pandemic.

"Gan is a leader with personal charisma and who always works to the limit," said Liao Chunlian, head nurse of the neurology department at Gan's hospital in Chongqing.

## Improving standards

Thirteen years ago, Gan put forward a new nursing concept regarding patients that is still considered a leading method, Liao said.

As a member of the expert pool of the Nursing Standards Committee of the National Health Standards Committee of China, Gan is committed to the study of clinical practice in managing critically ill patients.

Her research won the Science and

Technology Award of the Chinese Nursing Association in 2021. The ICU Patient Physical Restraint Assessment Scale that she developed was recognized by the association and used to establish China's first nursing standard for the physical restraint of hospitalized patients. The standard has improved clinical nursing practices for ICU patients who require restraints and has strengthened medical workers' respect for patients and their families. The standard was also presented at the 9th European Intensive Care Alliance's annual conference last year.

According to Gan's hospital, she has also established programs for the full career training and development of nurses, which have greatly improved their professional standing. Due to Gan's efforts to apply for six national specialist nurse training bases, 20 provincial-level specialist training bases and three technical training bases, Chongqing is now a pilot city for the standardized training of nurses in China.

Gan has had a hand in the training of nearly 10,000 specialist nurses at more than 100 hospitals and focused on cultivating high-level nursing talent and case management training in western China.

On May 12, 37 winners of the 49th Florence Nightingale Medal from 22 countries and regions were announced by the International Commission of Red Cross. China, with seven honorees, had the most awardees this year.

"This honor (the Florence Nightingale Medal) not only belongs to me and my hospital, but also to the whole city's health system and the Red Cross," Gan said.

Contact the writers at dengrui@chinadaily.com.cn

## Chongqing expands access to drinkable karst water

CHONGQING — A team from Chongqing's geology and mining authority has improved techniques to achieve a major breakthrough in karst groundwater exploration and drilling in the municipality.

The step forward has helped secure water supplies for thousands of residents, including students at a primary school in Xiushan county, which had chronic water shortages.

"The school will have easy access to wells to get drinking water in the future," cheered teachers and students when hearing the news.

Chongqing in Southwest China has vast mountainous and hilly areas, with prominent karst landforms and abundant water flowing through the city, said Du Chunlan, a senior engineer of hydraulic and environmental geology of the geological team. But it is difficult to develop and utilize water in the municipality.

The karst area of Chongqing is close to 30,000 square kilometers, accounting for one-third of the city's jurisdiction area, according to a report by Science and Technology Daily.

There are a large number of pipes and huge corrosion cracks and pores in the rock strata, and precipitation is quickly converted into groundwater.

Previously, it took about 30 days to drill a well in the karst areas due to the complex geological structure, said Lyu Yuxiang, deputy chief engineer with the geological team. Water shortages in such areas often occur in summer.

"We can't bear people waiting such a long time," Lyu said.

The team of engineers improved the drilling technique to promote efficiency. The new technique shortens the average duration of drilling a hole to three days, operating at the rate of more than 20 meters per hour.

The karst region has an uneven distribution of water resources, Lyu said. The transport and accumulation of karst water has been a challenging issue for a long time.

The success rate of drilling for water used to be only about 30 percent in karst regions.

The geological team has been engaged in water exploration and drilling since 2006, and it has improved the success rate to 70 percent.

The team has analyzed and summarized the accumulation of karst groundwater, the karst water storage structure and water exploration in southeastern and northeastern parts of Chongqing. It has also identified 26 water-rich blocks in the city's karst areas.

The team's achievements have also enriched the field of hydrogeological theory and provided a reference for exploiting karst groundwater.

Up till now, the geological team has set a water exploration standard in the karst areas of Chongqing, conducted 13 karst water supply demonstration projects, drilled 68 wells and made drinking water easily accessible for more than 80,000 people.

XINHUA

## Tests hope to help people get used to high altitudes

MOUNT CHO OYU BASE CAMP — While working at a base camp at the foot of Mount Cho Oyu, the sixth-highest mountain in the world with an altitude of 8,201 meters, Zhu Tong, an academican with the Chinese Academy of Sciences, took a reactivity test.

At the 4,950-meter-high camp, the academican wore a helmet connected to a computer. The screen occasionally featured words describing colors such as "red," "yellow" or

"green," but in a different color than the meaning of the word. However, when Zhu saw the word "red" displayed in blue, he chose the correct color of blue instead of the meaning of the word. "I happen to be one of those who rushed into the plateau region," said Zhu, who was conducting an experiment with volunteers to reveal more about the reactivity of people who are used to living in a high-altitude environment and those who are new to it.

After people from low-altitude areas enter a plateau area quickly, they are exposed to unfamiliar low-pressure and hypoxic environments and can be easily affected by acute high-altitude diseases such as pulmonary edema.

Zhu's team had previously monitored the health conditions of people approaching Mount Qomolangma — also known as Mount Everest, the world's highest peak — at altitudes of 5,200, 5,800,

6,350 and 8,848 meters. This time, the team focused on other experiments such as reactivity at more altitudes on Mount Cho Oyu to collect additional data.

"As you rise in altitude, your body will change accordingly, which makes this intuitive data valuable," said Zhu, 60.

The team collected blood, urine, saliva, feces and other samples, measured blood pressure and monitored the pulse wave velocity



Many results from the expedition will hopefully provide useful prevention and protection measures for short-term visitors to high-altitude areas."

Zhu Tong, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences

of the volunteers, including Zhu himself, to provide samples for follow-up research.

The 2023 Mount Cho Oyu expedition is part of the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau initiated in 2017.

"We are still collecting and organizing the data," Zhu said. "Many results from the expedition will hopefully provide useful prevention and protection measures for short-term visitors to high-altitude areas."

XINHUA



**Editor's note:** As protection of the planet's flora, fauna and resources becomes increasingly important, China Daily is publishing a series of stories to illustrate the country's commitment to safeguarding the natural world.



Two workers dig holes using a handheld seed drill so they can plant tree saplings in the Kubuqi Desert, China's seventh-largest expanse of arid land, in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, on April 27.  
PHOTOS BY LIU LEI / XINHUA

# Tree-planting stops desert branching out

Hundreds of people in Northwest China introduce saplings every year to help retard the expansion of the Kubuqi



A man changes a flat tire on a van the workers use to transport planting equipment and living supplies in the desert.

By CHINA DAILY

Every year from March to May, hundreds of workers from Gansu province and the Ningxia Hui autonomous region in Northwest China arrive at the Kubuqi Desert in Ordos, Inner Mongolia autonomous region, for the annual tree-planting season. The workers toil in the desert planting saplings as part of efforts to control the spread of the sand. For nearly two months, they live in temporary accommodations, such as tents or cabins, deep within the desert. In order to be closer to the planting areas, the lodgings are often situated far from towns, requiring supplies to be brought in from nearby settlements. Usually operating in pairs, the workers share the task of digging

tree holes, planting the saplings and transporting the materials. Using large handheld seed drills that weigh more than 10 kilograms, the workers can dig more than 1,000 holes a day. Trekking through the sandy terrain, they carry bundles of saplings and can cover more than 10 kilometers every day. The Kubuqi, which adjoins a stretch of the Yellow River, is the country's seventh-largest desert. Years of concerted efforts have seen the amount of sediment running into the river from the desert reduced by 80 percent, while the vegetation coverage rate has reached 53 percent. The dedication of the sand-control workers has played a vital role in achieving these environmental milestones.



**Left:** A team member carries a seed drill on his shoulder as he walks to the planting area. **Middle:** A couple video chats with family members in their prefabricated cabin in the Kubuqi after completing their daily planting tasks. **Right:** One worker digs tree holes while another places saplings in them. The workers usually operate in teams of two.



**Left:** A female worker carries tree-planting equipment as she treks across the desert in Ordos. **Right:** An aerial view of the prefabricated cabin where the workers live during each year's tree-planting season in the Kubuqi. The buildings are usually located deep in the desert to reduce journey times to the planting areas.





Representatives from more than 40 countries, regions and international organizations attend the third China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation held from Oct 4-6 in Nyingchi. PHOTOS BY PALDEN NYIMA / CHINA DAILY

# Trans-Himalaya region’s conservation in focus

International forum welcomes representatives from across the world to discuss area's ecological efforts and sustainable development

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The third China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, a three-day event, kicked off in Nyingchi, Tibet autonomous region, on Oct 5.

Hosted by the government of the Tibet autonomous region and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the three-day gathering brought together representatives from more than 40 countries, regions and international organizations, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Italy and Norway.

Themed “Promoting the Harmony of Humans and Nature, Sharing the Fruits of Cooperation and Development”, the forum aimed to build international consensus on advancing ecological conservation and assist sustainable development in the trans-Himalaya region.

Wang Yi, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and director of the Office of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the CPC Central Committee, said sitting at the world's highest altitude, the trans-Himalaya region boasts unique ecosystems; rich species and resources; diverse cultures and history, and enjoys broad space for cooperation.

It is a land brimming with vigor and promise. Since the forum's launch, China has been engaged in extensive and in-depth cooperation with other countries in the trans-Himalaya region. It has played an important role in bolstering eco-



A performance featuring Tibet's culture, lifestyles and landscapes is held at the opening ceremony of the China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation.

nomical and social development and improving the governance of the ecological environment in the region, he said.

Wang Junzheng, Party secretary of Tibet, spoke at the keynote forum on Oct 5.

He emphasized the importance of working together to develop

clean energy, agriculture, digital economy and other areas. He also mentioned the idea of working together to develop the Himalayan Economic Cooperation Belt.

Luamanuvae Albert Mariner, the Samoan ambassador to China, said in an exclusive interview with China Daily that the forum

brings all the region's countries together to engage in important dialogue and explore solutions to some critical challenges, not only in the region, but in the global context.

“Good neighbors are more important, more valuable than gold, and that is the essence of the

forum to continue to explore areas to pursue mutual trust and cooperation on issues that are critical to the region,” he said.

According to a news conference held on Thursday night regarding the forum, Tibet will take multiple measures to expand its opening-up to the outside world.

“Tibet will further relax access conditions, establish open platforms and expand exchanges and cooperation,” said Yang Lahong, deputy director of the Foreign Affairs Office of Tibet.

“We will organize more high-quality and high-standard international activities such as the Forum on Development of Tibet, the China Xizang Tourism and Culture International Expo and the China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation,” said Yang.

“We will vigorously develop international sister cities, strengthen exchanges and cooperation with friendly international organizations and promote mutual learning and cooperative development between Tibet and various parts of the world,” she added.

A milestone achievement of the China Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum is that it released the Nyingchi Initiative for deepening international cooperation in the region, after a broad consensus was reached among participants.

In the initiative, China has proposed to deepen international ecological cooperation and promote harmony between humanity and nature, strengthen international development cooperation, share the outcomes of the development, promote people-to-people and cultural dialogues and exchanges, safeguard the diversity of world civilizations, maintain international peace and security and improve the global governance system.

## Carbon neutrality achieved, says chief

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region has achieved overall carbon neutrality, said Yan Jinhai, head of the regional government, during a forum on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau ecosystem in early September.

The Namjagbarwa forum on the building of a national ecological civilization highland in Tibet kicked off on Sept 10 in the autonomous region's Nyingchi city. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Yan said Tibet is able to make greater contributions to China's dual-carbon targets.

Citing data from the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Yan said that currently, the carbon sink of the plateau ecosystem amounts to 162 million metric tons per year, accounting for 8-16 percent of China's total ecosystem carbon sink.

He added the annual carbon sink of Tibet's ecosystem in recent years reached around 476 million tons of carbon dioxide, with its annual carbon emissions totaling about 11.5 million tons, indicating that the region has achieved carbon neutrality.

Known as the “roof of the world” and the “water tower” of Asia — as it is the source of several big international rivers on the continent, the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau is an important region for the entire ecosystem of Asia and is crucial in tackling the challenge of global warming, according to Yan.

He noted that Tibet remains as one of the regions with the best ecological environment in the world,



Black-necked cranes are spotted in Lhundrub county of Lhasa, Tibet, showing the improved ecological environment in this autonomous region in Southwest China. HUANG HUOLONG / XINHUA

featuring good air and water qualities.

Yan said this status is closely related to Tibet's focus on ecology in its socioeconomic development. The autonomous region has the largest area of nature reserves, which account for about 36 percent of its land.

Piao Shilong, a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, confirmed the realization of carbon neutrality not only in Tibet, but in the entire Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

“The ecosystem of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau absorbs a net 100 million tons of carbon dioxide each year, which is far more than the anthropogenic emissions of the region. It is clear that the plateau has achieved carbon neutrality,” Piao said.

At the forum, Huang Runqiu, minister of ecology and environment, endorsed Tibet's achievements in environmental protection and pledged that the Ministry of Ecology and Environment will continue its efforts to support ecological improvement in Tibet.

Meanwhile, other experts and scholars delivered assessments of the carbon budget of the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau ecosystem, aiming to reveal the function and characteristics of the plateau's carbon sink amid the influence of a warming climate and humidification.

The Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, with an area of around 2.58 million

square kilometers, spans six provincial-level regions in western China, including Qinghai and Tibet.

During the forum, Yao Tandong, a CAS member and the team leader of the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, revealed important research results of the expedition.

Warmer temperatures and more humidity have been the major trend of climate change on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau over the years and will continue into the future, Yao said.

This year marks the sixth anniversary of the launch of the second comprehensive scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau.

A law on ecological protection of the plateau came into effect on Sept 1. Based on the new law and other official documents, the expedition team will carry out their international cooperation projects in the scientific research on the Third Pole environment to deepen global cooperation on climate change, according to Yao.

The Third Pole covers the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and surrounding areas, storing abundant snow and glaciers.

More than 120 government officials, experts and scholars including famous academicians from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering attended the two-day forum.

Xinhua contributed to this story.

## Long-term litter picking work helps village make tidy sum from tourism

By YUAN SHENGGAO

By Lake Ra'og Tso in Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region sits Aru village, where decades ago almost all local youngsters had to raft across the lake to reach the nearest township while using a wooden stick to pick up floating garbage along the way.

The villagers' eco-friendly practice has turned into a cause supported by government funds, which has also proven to be lucrative due to booming tourism development.

A total of 227 people across 43 households now live in the village, which is in the city of Chamdo in eastern Tibet.

The local government hires 44 locals to take turns to clean up garbage by the lake and the surrounding forests.

These ecosystem “guardians” are also in charge of patrolling and maintaining the roads and the sanitation work of the surrounding environment. After collection, the garbage will be sent to waste disposal factories for recycling.

A staff member can earn a monthly income of 3,500 yuan

(\$478) for their work, said Dampa, a 46-year-old villager.

About two decades ago, when Dampa was still in his 20s, he was conditioned to scoop up the floating rubbish on the lake just like his peers. “There was mainly plastic waste dumped by the residents and tourists. The garbage was particularly noticeable against the beautiful lake,” Dampa recalled.

To maintain the clean and picturesque scenery of the lake, the villagers started garbage picking of their own accord.

In 2008, a bridge was built across the lake, putting an end to the rafting travel needs of the locals. However, the garbage collecting routine has survived.

Tsering Dondrup, 25, a village official, said he went to school on Dampa's raft when he was a primary school student. The official remembered clearly the scenes of adults picking up garbage on the lake.

In 2021, when Tsering Dondrup became part of the village committee, he and other officials decided to protect the lake's ecosystem while applying for a scenic area recognition of the village.

A well-preserved ecological environment of the lake and its surroundings is a must for the possibility of a burgeoning tourism sector, Tsering Dondrup said. Therefore, he and other colleagues started to promote environmental protection knowledge to the villagers to raise awareness of the ecosystem.

In 2021, Aru village was listed among the region's demonstration villages of ecological civilization construction, winning the fame as “the most beautiful village by Lake Ra'og Tso”.

The lake, the largest in the east of Tibet, now receives 300,000 visitors annually, becoming a popular tourist destination in the region, which helps the locals rake in a total of 30 million yuan every year.

“Without the villagers' efforts and the government support in recycling garbage, there is no possibility that Ra'og Tso could sustain its beauty as it is now, and our village will never live up to its reputation of ‘the most beautiful village’ by the lake,” said Xu Cong, a village official.

Xinhua contributed to this story.



An elevated view of Aru village by Lake Ra'og Tso. TENZIN NYIDA / XINHUA

ADVERTORIAL



WORLD

Israel rejects calls at UN for cease-fire in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS/GAZA/JERUSALEM — Israel vowed again to destroy Hamas and rejected calls for a cease-fire from the UN chief, the Palestinians and many countries at a high-level UN meeting on Tuesday. Israel's Foreign Minister Eli Cohen also dismissed calls for "proportionality" in the country's response to Hamas' surprise attacks on Israel on Oct 7 that killed 1,400 people and has since led to more than 6,500 Palestinian deaths in Gaza.

Cohen urged the world to "stand united behind Israel to defeat Hamas".

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki demanded an end to the Israeli attacks.

"We are here today to stop the killing, to stop ... the ongoing massacres being deliberately and systematically and savagely perpetrated by Israel, the occupying power, against the Palestinian civilian population," he said. "Over 2 million Palestinians are on a survival mission every day, every night."

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres opened the monthly meeting on the decades-old Palestine-Israel conflict — which has turned into a major event with ministers from the conflict's key parties and a dozen other countries flying to New York — warning that "the situation in the Middle East is growing more dire by the hour". "It is important to also recognize the attacks by Hamas did not happen in a vacuum," Guterres said.

"The grievances of the Palestinian people cannot justify the appalling attacks by Hamas. And those appalling attacks cannot justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people," he said.

Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, called for "a comprehensive cease-fire" between Palestine and Israel.

Zhang emphasized that preventing a greater humanitarian catastrophe must be the top priority among all ongoing efforts.



People carry a child at the site of an Israeli strike on a house in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip, on Tuesday. IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA / REUTERS

phe must be the top priority among all ongoing efforts.

As the Security Council met, a barrage of Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip crushed multiple residential buildings and buried families under rubble. Nearly 90 countries were on the speakers list, including about 30 foreign ministers and deputy ministers, many echoing calls for a cease-fire and halt to attacks on Palestinian civilians.

Risk of spreading

Guterres said the risk of the Gaza conflict spreading through the region is increasing as societies splinter and tensions threaten to boil over. He appealed to all to "pull back from the brink before the violence claims even more lives and spreads even farther".

Deadly clashes have intensified between the Israeli military and Pal-

estinians in the occupied West Bank, and resurged between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah armed group along the Israeli-Lebanon border, Reuters reported.

Late on Tuesday, eight trucks with water, food and medicine entered Gaza from Egypt. UN agencies said more than 20 times current deliveries were needed for the narrow coastal strip's 2.3 million people.

A Palestinian spokesman said on Tuesday that the Gaza Strip experienced a "total collapse" of the health system due to the power outage and the exhaustion of fuel needed to operate generators in hospitals.

World leaders are seeking to prevent the conflict from spreading.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated their support for a two-state solution to the Palestine-

Israel conflict, during a telephone call on Tuesday. The two sides expressed "deep concern over the growing number of civilian casualties and the catastrophic deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip", the Kremlin said.

US President Joe Biden and Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud spoke over the phone on Tuesday and agreed on broader diplomacy "to maintain stability across the region and prevent the conflict from expanding", the White House said.

Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich put the direct cost of the conflict at around 1 billion shekels (\$246 million) a day to Israel, Reuters reported on Wednesday.

Agencies, Minhu Zhang in New York and Xinhua contributed to this story.

Sweden's bid to join NATO hangs in air

Hungarian lawmakers block proposal despite optimism from Turkish move

By CHEN WEIHUA in Brussels  
chenweihua@chinadaily.com.cn

The Hungarian Parliament's refusal on Tuesday of a proposal to hold a vote on Sweden's NATO application has dampened any rekindled optimism after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan submitted Stockholm's accession protocol to his country's Parliament for ratification on Monday.

The ruling Fidesz party led by Prime Minister Viktor Orban has been opposing Sweden's bid since July 2022, arguing that Stockholm has been meddling and unfairly criticizing democracy and the rule of law in Hungary.

Fidesz lawmakers blocked the Tuesday proposal to schedule a vote, said Agnes Vadai, a lawmaker with the opposition Democratic Coalition party and a former secretary of state in the Ministry of Defense.

All 31 NATO members must agree unanimously for the admission.

Sweden and Finland handed in their official application letters to join NATO on May 18, 2022. Finland became the 31st member in April this year after winning approval from all member states.

The next possible time for the Hungarian Parliament, officially known as the National Assembly, to vote on Sweden's ratification will be during its session beginning on Nov 6.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said in New York on Tuesday that Turkey's recent move to initiate the ratification of Sweden's NATO membership does not affect Hungary's stance on the issue.

He highlighted the autonomy of the Hungarian Parliament.

"The Hungarian Parliament is the sovereign Parliament of a sovereign country, so it will make a sovereign decision on this issue," Szijarto was quoted as saying by government spokesman Zoltan Kovacs on X.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson was optimistic early Tuesday. He said he has "received assurances from the Hungarian prime minister a couple of times

before that they will not delay Sweden, and I think Hungary stands by that". Kristersson would not give a timeline for membership.

"I don't set any dates," he told a news conference in Stockholm on Tuesday with visiting NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg.

He added that he had always been convinced that Sweden would get to where it is now and that it would lead to final ratification by both the Turkish and Hungarian Parliaments.

Stoltenberg also said that he had received exactly the same signals as Kristersson that Hungary will not delay the process and that Hungary will not be the last country to ratify. "And since there are two countries that have not ratified, it goes without saying that this should also happen quickly in Hungary," he said.

Erdogan's submission

Stoltenberg said that following Erdogan's submission of the ratification documents, he counts on "a speedy ratification" by the Turkish Parliament, adding that Sweden has fulfilled its commitment by amending the Constitution, changing laws, expanding counterterrorism operations and resuming arms exports to Turkey.

It is still unknown when the Turkish Parliament, or the Grand National Assembly, would vote on the Swedish ratification.

"If (Joe) Biden administration forwarded a request to sell F-16s to Turkey in coming days to US Senate's relevant committee, the Turkish Parliament's relevant committee will ratify Sweden's NATO entry immediately," Soner Cagaptay, a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, said on X on Tuesday.

Ashok Swain, a professor of peace and conflict research at Uppsala University in Sweden, expressed skepticism.

"Erdogan has sent Sweden's NATO application to the Turkish parliament. Has Erdogan changed his mind or scapegoating the Parliament?" he wrote on X.

Agencies contributed to this story.

Anti-black racism on rise in EU, survey finds

VIENNA — Racism toward black people is growing in Europe, with Germany, Austria and Finland showing the highest rates of discrimination and harassment, a survey of first- and second-generation black immigrants in 13 EU countries published on Wednesday found.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, or FRA, which commissioned the survey and analyzed its findings in a report, said that in the space of six years since the previous study, the proportion of respondents who had felt racially discriminated against in the past 12 months had risen by 10 percentage points to 34 percent.

In Austria and Germany, the proportion was 64 percent — almost twice the previous level of 33 percent in Germany and a significant increase from the 42 percent recorded in Austria six years ago. The next worst was Finland with 54 percent.

"It is shocking to see no improvement since our last survey," FRA Director Michael O'Flaherty said. "Instead, people of African descent face ever more discrimination just because of the color of their skin."

The proportion of respondents who reported feeling racially discriminated against over the past five years rather than 12 months rose to 45 percent across the 13 countries surveyed, an increase of six points from the previous study. The top three were the same, with Germany's rate the highest at 76 percent.

The poll carried out by Ipsos for the FRA was a sweeping survey of 16,124 immigrants and descendants of immigrants across 15 countries from which several FRA reports will be produced — on other ethnic minorities and Muslims. It was conducted between October 2021 and September 2022.

This report, entitled "Being Black in the EU", is the first produced from that wider survey. It focuses on 6,752 people born in sub-Saharan Africa or with at least one parent born there living in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

AGENCIES VIA XINHUA



Local learning

Students attend class in the open in Afghanistan's Zabul Province on Tuesday. Mobile schools are helping to educate children in a country disrupted by decades of conflict.

SANAULLAH SEIAM / AFP

Strategies sought to achieve SDGs

By NDUMISO MLILO  
in Johannesburg, South Africa  
For China Daily

Countries, particularly the BRICS grouping, should urgently implement policies that can act as a catalyst in meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, said South African scholars.

Ronney Ncwadi, a professor in economics and director of the School of Economics, Development and Tourism at Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha, said the COVID-19 pandemic reversed the gains which had been made by countries in meeting the SDGs.

Commenting on a recent meeting held in South Africa on promoting the SDGs, Ncwadi said the pandemic affected human resources by hitting those with critical skills and reducing incomes.

The UN has come up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals or

Global Goals which countries are expected to meet by 2030.

BRICS is better placed to make a positive contribution to the SDGs because of its influence on the international community and economic muscle, Ncwadi said.

"BRICS has a role to play in contributing to the realization of the SDGs," he said. "We should be able to help each other. We have the New Development Bank, which is the financial muscle that ought to address these inequalities, problems and setbacks in terms of growth."

BRICS countries have to improve trade, which will result in economic growth and poverty reduction, and move toward achieving the SDGs, Ncwadi said.

Christopher Isike, professor and director of the Africa Centre for the Study of the United States at the University of Pretoria, said that in the next six years, countries can make a difference in meeting the

SDGs. Governments and citizens need a social contract that covers what each party has to deliver to realize the SDGs, Isike said.

"BRICS countries have to come together and agree on a policy on public health ... All will have a mandate to institute a public health system," he said. "Public health is the foundation of any economy and well-being of a country. If we have a social contract, the state will invest more in health and education and those soft powers have a multiplier effect on achieving the SDGs."

Amkela Dyantyi, founder of the private sector Small and Medium Enterprises CEO's Group Agency in South Africa, said that if small enterprises are supported with skills and finance, they can assist in job creation and economic growth and contribute to meeting the SDGs.

The writer is a freelancer for China Daily.

Experts moot single visa system to boost tourism in Gulf region

By JAN YUMUL in Hong Kong  
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A unified travel visa for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries could help develop the region's reputation as a long-holiday destination, rather than just for short-haul trips, experts said.

But the GCC, which comprises Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman, will have to work on creating their "bucket lists" to give travelers more reasons to stay longer and spend more in their destination countries, alongside the hassle-free scheme that is being planned, they added.

The single Gulf visa — like the

Schengen visa of Europe, the world's largest travel-free zone — was first floated at the Arabian Travel Market trade show in Dubai in May.

Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, the UAE's minister of economy, announced that the GCC countries would be rolling out a synchronized Gulf tourist visa within the next two years, the Emirates News Agency, or WAM, reported on Oct 23.

He said specific regulations and legislation for the visa will be developed, with a targeted rollout between 2024 and 2025, subject to the readiness of each GCC country's internal systems.

"This initiative is an integral part of the GCC 2030 tourism strategy, designed to elevate the tourism sec-

tor's contribution to the GDP through increased inter-GCC travel and elevated hotel occupancy rates, transforming the GCC into a preeminent global destination for both regional and international tourists," Al Marri was quoted as saying by WAM.

Patrick Cooke, managing editor for the Middle East and Asia regions at research consultancy Oxford Business Group, told China Daily that a common travel visa "would help international visitors to view the Gulf region as an aspirational destination for a long holiday" rather than a short transit stop or business travel location, ultimately generating more tourism revenues and hospitality jobs in the process.

In recent years, some countries —

like the UAE in 2017, and Saudi Arabia and Qatar during the pandemic — had introduced stopover programs and discounts with hotel packages, which range from 24 to 96 hours. These packages aim to encourage more visitors to see the cities as more than just a transit destination.

In transit

According to the Arabian Travel Market report of 2019, more than 63 percent of the 89 million passengers who passed through Dubai airport in 2018 were in transit with just 8 percent of the passengers leaving the airport to explore the emirate.

Peggy Li, managing partner at SpsAffinity, a service-centric global strategy and communications con-

sultancy based in Dubai, told China Daily the unified GCC visa "will make a lot of sense for the GCC's internal travel". She said that at the moment only Dubai has "many bucket lists" in regard to visitor experiences and that the rest of the GCC region needed to catch up.

In 2022, the GCC received 48 million international arrivals, and the UAE emerged as the top tourist destination in the region, receiving 22.7 million visitors, according to the UN World Tourism Organization.

Saudi Arabia welcomed 16 million people, while other top tourist recipients in the Gulf that year included Bahrain with 3.7 million visitors, as well as Qatar at 2.6 million and Oman at 2.9 million.



WORLDUS

Personal exchanges cited as key for bilateral ties

By MINLU ZHANG in New York  
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While there has been some thawing in diplomatic relations between the US and China, it is the people-to-people exchanges that remain crucial, the president of a major US-China organization said on Wednesday.

Stephen Orlins, president of the National Committee on US-China Relations (NCUSR), said "what we're seeing now is some breakthroughs in the government-to-government relationship. But what we need to do is make sure the people-to-people foundation for that exists."

Orlins spoke at a news conference at the Chinese Consulate General in New York, where experts and scholars shared their insights and perspectives on strengthening people-to-people relations between the United States and China.

The "US-China People's Dialogue" news conference was co-organized by Tsinghua University and the NCUSR.

"We need the people-to-people relationship to strengthen in order to put a foundation under the political relationship," said Orlins, who said that such relations have remained sound.

Basketball legend Yao Ming, the president of the Chinese Basketball Association, said at the news conference that the sport serves as a gateway for cultural exchange, and that there is room for further international games and player exchanges between the US and China.

Yao starred for the Houston Rockets in the National Basketball Association (NBA) and is a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame in the US. He expressed a desire for more young individuals to have similar exchange opportunities in the future.

Zhu Min, vice-chairman of the



NBA Hall of Fame legends Tracy McGrady and Chinese Basketball Association President Yao Ming speak at the annual Gala Dinner of the National Committee on US-China Relations (NCUSR) in New York on Tuesday. MINLU ZHANG / CHINA DAILY

China Centre for International Economic Exchanges, who is also an envoy for the Sino-UK Professional and Financial Service for the Belt and Road Initiative, pointed out several

infrastructure investments and the real estate sector.

"These changes in the supply chain and demand require us to rethink how to shift demand from international markets to the domestic market," he said. "While these three factors remain important, they are no longer the primary growth engines. So, in this new landscape, what do we do? We need to find new growth engines," Zhu said.

Such new growth engines should focus on three key areas: placing more emphasis on domestic consumption, strengthening Chinese manufacturing, and working toward carbon neutrality, he said.

When asked about the ethics and governance of artificial intelligence (AI), Xue Lan, a distinguished professor of arts, humanities and social sciences and the dean of Schwarzman College at Tsinghua University, noted that the Chinese and American

China rejects UN resolution over lack of call for cease-fire

By HENG WEILI in New York  
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China on Wednesday voted against a United Nations Security Council resolution on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, saying that it was "introduced in haste" and does not address the crucial issue of a cease-fire.

The draft resolution "does not reflect the world's strongest calls for a cease-fire and an end to the fighting," said Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the UN.

The latest resolution drafted by the United States condemned Hamas, expressed support for Israel and called for the release of all hostages.

Russia and the United Arab Emirates also voted against the resolution.

Zhang said: "China is by no means opposing the council taking actions. On the contrary, we have always strongly called for the council to play a responsible role."

"What we oppose is that the draft resolution is evasive on the most urgent issue of ending the hostility. It has never been able to call for an immediate cease-fire in clear and unambiguous terms," he said.

"At this moment, cease-fire is not just a diplomatic term; it means the life and death of many civilians. If a council resolution is ambiguous on the question of war and peace and of life and death, it is not only irresponsible, but also extremely dangerous," Zhang said.

"It is tantamount to paving the way for large-scale military actions and giving the green light to further escalation of war," he said.

The ambassador mentioned that on Oct 18, a draft resolution focusing on the humanitarian situation of the conflict and emphasizing the protection of civilians, which was supported by an overwhelming majority of council members, was vetoed by the US. A draft resolution proposed by Russia on Oct 16 also was vetoed.

On Saturday evening, the US introduced the new draft resolution "that set aside the consensus of the members, included many elements that were still deeply divisive, and went far beyond the humanitarian realm," Zhang said.

Several Security Council members, including China, Russia, the

UAE and Brazil proposed amendments to the text.

"However, the sponsor, ignoring the major concerns of relevant members, made only cosmetic changes to the draft" before the text was rushed to a vote, Zhang said.

"China is by no means indifferent to acts that harm civilians. On the contrary, we strongly condemned at the first opportunity all violence and attacks against civilians and called for diplomatic efforts to promote the early release of hostages," he said.

"What we oppose is that the draft resolution does not call on the parties concerned to stop the indiscriminate and asymmetrical use of force, nor does it call for a thorough investigation into the heinous attacks such as the one on the Al-Ahli Hospital," he said. "Such selective application of international law and double standards will only push more innocent civilians to the brink of death."

Zhang said that the draft resolution "selectively avoids referring to the root causes of the current humanitarian crisis in Gaza and fails to urge Israel to lift its full siege on Gaza and unambiguously terms" he said.

"Such an evasive and ineffectual approach will only accelerate Gaza's falling into an even greater humanitarian catastrophe," he said.

"China is by no means denying Israel's security concerns. On the contrary, we have always strongly advocated that equal attention should be paid to the security concerns and legitimate rights of both Israel and Palestine," Zhang said.

"What we oppose is that the draft resolution attempts to establish a new narrative on the Palestinian question, ignoring the fact that the Palestinian territory has been occupied for a long time, and evading the fundamental issue of independent statehood for the Palestinian people," he said.

Zhang said that the draft "departs from the spirit of previous UN resolutions and embeds the dangerous logic of clash of civilizations and the justification of war and use of force."

"If adopted, it will completely dash the prospect of the two-state solution and plunge the Palestinian and Israeli peoples into a vicious cycle of hatred and confrontation," he said.



New Speaker of the House Mike Johnson smiles as he walks down the outer steps of the US House of Representatives with House Republican Conference Chair Elise Stefanik and other members of the House to make a statement to reporters and television cameras after being elected speaker, at the US Capitol in Washington on Wednesday. ELIZABETH FRANTZ / REUTERS

US House elects conservative new speaker

By AI HEPING in New York  
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Republicans in the US House of Representatives on Wednesday ended weeks of tumult that left Congress with one working legislative body by electing Representative Mike Johnson of Louisiana as House speaker on the first vote.

Johnson swept on the first ballot with support from all Republicans. The 51-year-old social conservative is little known outside Congress and is said to have few foes, but he has an important GOP backer: Donald Trump.

"Congratulations to Rep Mike Johnson" former president Donald J. Trump said in a post on Truth Social, adding that Johnson will be a "GREAT SPEAKER".

Johnson is a strong ally of Trump. He defended the then-president during the impeachment hearings and opposed certifying the 2020 election of Joe Biden. A constitutional lawyer, he wrote a brief offering a legal justification for trying to overturn the 2020 election and recruited House Republicans to sign a legal brief rejecting the election results.

In a statement, President Joe Biden congratulated Johnson and said the GOP needed to "move swiftly to address our national security needs and to avoid a shutdown in 22 days".

Johnson, who was a political dark horse just the day before taking the highest position in the lower chamber, promised to reach across the aisle despite his differences with House Democrats to address the country's issues.

Johnson said Republicans would "dispense with all of the usual ceremonies and celebrations" and get to work. "You're going to see an aggressive schedule in the days and weeks ahead," he said.

He joined Congress in 2017 after serving in the state Legislature. The son of a firefighter who was critically burned and disabled in the line of duty, Johnson is the father of four children.

A lawyer and former chairman of the conservative Republican Study Committee, he is known for conservative stances on cultural issues and spending. He has voted for a national abortion ban, co-sponsored a 20-week abortion ban and has proposed legislation that would make it a federal crime to transport a minor across state lines for an abortion. He also supports LGBTQ restrictions.

There has been a split in the House GOP over aid to Ukraine. Johnson voted against two different appropriations bills that provided aid in 2022 and just last month. "American taxpayers have sent over \$100 billion in aid to Ukraine in the last year," Johnson said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, in February. "They deserve to know if the Ukrainian government is being entirely forthcoming and transparent about the use of this massive sum of taxpayer resources."

An evangelical Christian, he hosts a religious podcast with his wife, Kelly, a licensed pastoral counselor. In it, Johnson often talks at length about his vehement opposition to abortion, calls the Democratic agenda socialist and rails against the prosecution of Trump in his efforts to interfere in the 2020 election.

In his first address to Congress as speaker, Johnson said that he will bring to the floor "in just a little while" a resolution in support of Israel.

After Israel, Johnson said addressing the "broken border" will be the second priority of House Republicans.

Congress faces a mid-November deadline to keep the government funded. In a letter to his colleagues, Johnson proposed advancing a temporary spending measure until either Jan 15 or April 15, while working to advance eight of 12 individual annual appropriations bills that haven't yet cleared the House.

Lawmakers also will have to deal with the Biden administration's \$106 billion request to fund

aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan and manage the flow of migrants at the US border. Last month, 117 House GOP lawmakers, including Johnson, voted against \$300 million in security assistance for Ukraine.

Johnson wasn't the first choice of his GOP colleagues. Representative Tom Emmer of Minnesota, the No. 3 House Republican, defeated him Tuesday morning in an internal vote for the speaker nomination.

But hard-right conservatives forced Emmer to withdraw. Then a second round of nominations was held, but Johnson didn't initially win a majority. He finally prevailed after multiple rounds of voting and emerged as the fourth Republican nominee in what had become a cycle of political infighting since Kevin McCarthy's ouster as speaker.

After 22 days and four House Republican speaker nominees, the Louisiana representative won a 220-209 tally to become the 56th speaker. All Democrats voted for House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

Any candidate for speaker needs a majority of votes in the 433-member House, assuming all members vote for an individual. Republicans hold 221 seats, compared with 212 for Democrats, though some members were absent.

Agencies contributed to this story.

US advances timetable for chip-export curbs on China

By LIA ZHU in San Francisco  
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The US government has accelerated its timetable for implementing new expanded curbs on the export of high-end artificial intelligence chips to China.

US chip designer Nvidia said in a new regulatory filing that the government informed the company on Monday that the interim final rule "is effective immediately," according to a Reuters report.

The rule is an update to the previous export controls imposed by the US Commerce Department a year ago to

stop China from acquiring advanced chips and equipment to make them.

The move is seen as an attempt to curtail China's technological development, which the government claims is necessary for "national security".

As part of the new restrictions announced on Oct 17, the advanced computing chips rule was originally set to take effect on Nov 16. However, the government advanced the timetable without disclosing any reasons.

Under the new rule, chip companies must notify the US government before selling to China any chips that fall slightly below the restricted threshold that falls under the previous rules.

The rule is believed to target Nvidia, a leader in graphics chips that are used to develop AI services.

The company has been selling modified advanced AI chips A800 and H800 — a weakened version of its flagship processor — to Chinese companies to comply with previous export rules.

The new restrictions will bar sales of both chips. Nvidia's other products, including A100, H100 and LAOS chips, also are impacted by the curbs.

The company said in the filing that it didn't expect a near-term impact on earnings from the move. But it has questioned the long-term effectiveness of limiting trade.

Nvidia CFO Colette Kress said in June that long-term restrictions on China will impact "our future business and financial results" and that the American semiconductor industry will suffer "a permanent loss of opportunities".

Like Nvidia, chip designer Advanced Micro Devices also relies on its massive consumer chip sales to China to fund their research and development of data center technology.

The US also expanded its export restrictions to additional countries and overseas subsidiaries of Chinese companies to prevent "circumvention

of the controls".

The administration also added Chinese chip companies to a trade restriction list, requiring overseas manufacturers to gain a US license to fill orders from those companies.

The US government has been under political pressure to tighten the restrictions on China after the release of 5G-capable Mate 60 phones by Huawei Technologies in August.

The achievement is regarded as a blow to Washington's ability to clamp down on Beijing's technological development.

But some major semiconductor companies and their trade group have

objected to the administration's strategy, saying it "harms the US semiconductor ecosystem without advancing national security," as overseas customers look elsewhere.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies said last week that US export controls have affected US industry in two major ways: loss of Chinese market demand for leading-edge chips and their associated technologies, as well as retaliatory controls and sanctions by China.

"Additionally, the Chinese government has been working to convince domestic technology firms to source their inputs domestically rather than from US suppliers. This threat of designing-out US critical technological inputs threatens US industry en masse," said the analysis.



# BUSINESS

## Major renewable energy power base starts 2nd phase construction

By ZHENG XIN  
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Construction of the second phase of China's largest renewable energy power base in the country's Gobi Desert and other arid regions will further facilitate the country's shift from its dependence on coal to renewables for power generation — a boon to achieving the country's sustainable energy ambitions, said industry experts.

The second phase kicked off construction on Tuesday in Northwest China's Ningxia Hui autonomous region, said its operator China Energy Investment Corp, or China Energy.

Located in the Tengger Desert, the project, with a total installed capacity of 2 gigawatts, is expected to provide approximately 3.96 billion kilowatt-hours of clean electricity annually, helping save more than 1.2 million metric tons of standard coal and reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by more than 3.29 million tons, it said.

The first phase of the project, with an installed capacity of 1 million kilowatts, was connected to the grid and began generating power in July, generating more than 1 billion kWh by the end of September, the company said.

Primarily focusing on large-scale wind and solar power development with a total installed capacity of 13 million kW, the project, the country's first in response to the government's ambitions to speed up the construction of solar and wind power generation facilities in the Gobi and other arid regions, will help regions like Ningxia, as well as the Xinjiang Uygur and Inner Mongolia autonomous regions, upgrade to a new energy-based structure, said Luo Zuoxian, head



These (arid) regions, which used to rely on heavy consumption of traditional energy resources for economic growth, possess abundant wind and solar resources."

Luo Zuoxian, head of intelligence and research at the Sinopec Economics and Development Research Institute

of intelligence and research at the Sinopec Economics and Development Research Institute.

"The regions will play a key role in boosting the proportion of clean power in the country's energy mix," he said.

"These regions, which used to rely on heavy consumption of traditional energy resources for economic growth, possess abundant wind and solar resources. The government's guidance will not only benefit the local economy but ensure a sufficient green power supply in the country's load center."

According to the National Energy Administration, China saw a steady increase in the newly installed capacity of clean energy in the first seven months of this year, with the newly installed capacity of solar power expanding 42.9 percent year-on-year to 490 million kW, while that of wind power stands at about 390 million kW, representing a year-on-year increase of 14.3 percent.



Employees install photovoltaic panels at a solar power station in the Tengger Desert in Gansu province. FAN PEISHEN / XINHUA



State Grid technicians inspect charging piles at a station in Yantai, Shandong province. TANG KE / FOR CHINA DAILY

## State Grid ramps up efforts in EV charging

Local units spur innovation to improve services, ensure supply

By ZHUANG QIANG and LI JIAYING

China, now home to more than 16 million new energy vehicles, is seeing a stronger domestic uptrend in the installation of charging piles as the nation's NEV sector booms amid its nationwide green transformation.

State Grid Corp's Laiwu branch in Jinan, Shandong province, is among the local power suppliers that are revving up efforts to facilitate the charging process for electric vehicles.

With a slew of positive actions such as advancing charging infrastructure, building information-sharing platforms and improving maintenance services, the company has seen its efforts to this end bear fruit.

Thanks to such efforts, EV owners in Jinan's Laiwu district are now able to apply for the installation of charging piles in their residential compound with "remarkable speed and convenience."

"With the initial joint efforts by authorities and builders that promote charging accessibility and the establishment of a parking space information-sharing system, motorists can now apply for electric charging without the need for extensive documentation," said a staffer from Laiwu Power Supply Co under the State Grid.

The Laiwu company also cooperated with local NEV sellers to create a streamlined process for vehicle purchasing, charging pile installation and parking space management.

Partnerships have been established with several prominent automakers, including Beiqi Foton Motor Co, Chang'an Automobile Co and BYD, offering full life-cycle services to consumers. Currently, they have signed agreements with 16 residential areas designated as "green channels" by the local government for charging infrastructure, and established a system that shares information for 13,200 parking spaces.

In addition, Laiwu Power Supply Co is striving to advance the development of public charging infrastructure, through a forward-looking, region-specific approach that is closely aligned with urban and rural development plans.

The company has invested in and completed the construction of 75 charging stations and 280 piles in Laiwu, covering five high-speed service centers and 18 townships, with its "10-minute charging circles" established to provide EV owners with a worry-free power supply, it said.

In terms of the maintenance of charging infrastructure, the power supplier has leveraged cutting-edge solutions, such as platforms supported by big data and the internet of things, to monitor and manage the extensive network of charging stations 24/7.

Since the beginning of this year, cumulative electricity consumption from charging stations within Laiwu Power Supply Co's operational scope has exceeded 8 million kilowatt-hours, an increase of 47 percent over the same period last year.

What's happening in Laiwu is taking place all over the country, reflected by a high proportion of expressway service zones equipped with charging stations — 89.5 percent among the total nationwide by the end of June, the Ministry of Transport said.

According to the State Grid, the

total charging amount recorded among such service zones nationwide in just the first six days of the eight-day Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holiday reached 29.2 million kWh, a historic high for the period.

Innovation is also integral to boosting power use efficiency. According to State Grid's Jiangsu unit, its vehicle-grid integration network demonstration zone, the largest in China, has begun operations recently in Wuxi, Jiangsu province. The network can draw electricity to the smart grid from 50 NEVs simultaneously.

With the network, NEV owners can send unused power in their vehicles to the grid through charging piles at the demonstration center and receive subsidies accordingly.

The center will further expand and add more charging piles that are sufficient to meet the needs of charging 144 vehicles and discharging 50 vehicles, as well as a battery charging service for 400 vehicles at a time, the company said.

"Efforts to boost 'new infrastructure' have been highlighted at many high-level meetings in recent years, and China has an urgent need for such efforts amid its green transformation push, as demand for charging piles will continue to hike in the years to come," said Long Chaoan, an investment consultant with China Galaxy Securities Co Ltd.

According to a report by CITIC Securities, the ratio of existing NEVs to charging piles as of the end of 2022 is 2.5:1. As the nation is expected to have a total of 64.2 million NEVs by 2030, and with a target ratio of 1:1 by that time, there is great market potential in the sector in the years to come.

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## Canton Fair offers boon to exporters

By QIU QUANLIN in Guangzhou  
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At a booth inside the Pazhou International Convention and Exhibition Center in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, Xu Yajie, a sales manager, has been busy all day introducing colorful ceramic products to buyers from the United Arab Emirates.

An employee of Guangdong Sitong Group Co Ltd, Xu said "a higher number of overseas buyers, especially those from countries and regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, have visited the booth with interest in innovative products."

Guangdong Sitong is a ceramic company based in Chaozhou, Guangdong. It is among 9,674 companies showcasing their latest innovative products and services during the second phase of the 134th China Import and Export Fair, also known as the Canton Fair.

The event opened on Monday with an exhibition area of 515,000 square meters, displaying products and services in building materials, furniture, home decorations, gifts and household goods.

Guangdong Sitong, which exports to more than 90 markets worldwide, displayed tailor-made ceramic products during the event, Xu said.

"Thanks to preliminary preparations, especially in terms of increased investment in the design and research of new products, buyers from overseas markets like the Middle East, Europe and the United States, have shown greater intention for orders," Xu added.

Improvements in design and technology over the years have made the company's ceramic products offer more added value in the global market, especially in Germany, the Middle East and Central Asia, she said.

"We have seen an increased number of buyers from Germany, which has stricter market standards in design and technology for ceramic products. This has illustrated our products' competitiveness in overseas markets."

As of Wednesday, some 150,000 overseas buyers from 214 countries and regions have attended the event, an increase of more than 50 percent compared with the same phase of the last session of the fair, according to event organizers.

"We have made greater efforts in technological upgrading over the past three years, during which our overseas business was greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic," Xu said.

Apart from Guangdong Sitong, more Chinese manufacturers are investing deeper in design innovation and technological research to boost product competitiveness overseas.

Talent Group, a high-end candle and aromatherapy producer based in Dalian, Liaoning province, is displaying its latest innovative candle and aromatherapy series during the fair.

Its Restore series is mainly made of shea butter, a low-carbon material for candle and aroma products, which makes them more competitive in the international market, said Wang Lixin, Talent's chairman.

"Utilizing low-carbon global resources and incorporating traditional Chinese culture in design has greatly boosted our products' value in the global market. They are widely acclaimed by overseas buyers during the exhibition, especially those from developed markets," Wang said.

To accelerate its business expansion overseas, Talent, which exports to 101 markets worldwide, has built manufacturing bases in Thailand and Poland and a marketing center in Germany.

## China, GCC member economies keen to step up free trade talks

By ZHONG NAN  
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China and member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council are keen to move forward quickly on closing the China-GCC free trade agreement, a senior government official from Bahrain said on Wednesday.

The aim of sealing a deal as soon as possible is to further reinforce their economic and trade ties, said Abdulla Fakhro, minister of industry and commerce, Bahrain.

In addition to enhancing bilateral trade, modern FTAs encompass critical sectors such as services and digital trade. Both sides have acknowledged the substantial value and benefits that such an agreement will contribute to their respective economies, he said.

Fakhro met with Commerce Minister Wang Wentao in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, on Sunday.

China and the GCC nations had held 10 rounds of negotiations between 2005 and 2022 regarding a

bilateral FTA. They have reached agreement on the majority of issues concerning trade in goods. Negotiations on trade in services have also been launched, according to information released by China's Ministry of Commerce.

Headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the GCC is a political and economic union of six Arab states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — that border the Persian Gulf. Some of these are among the world's top fossil fuel exporters.

The trade value between China and GCC countries reached \$315.8 billion in 2022. China has also become the GCC's top trading partner and the leading destination for petrochemical product exports within the grouping.

"A free trade agreement can serve as a robust foundation for future agreements, including those related to a wide range of aspects such as bilateral investment agreements and knowledge sharing. It lays the groundwork for the emergence of

**\$315.8 billion**

trade between China and GCC countries in 2022

various other agreements in the future," said Fakhro.

Noting that Bahrain and China are close economic and trade partners, he said the kingdom is willing to deepen its cooperation in jointly developing the Belt and Road Initiative with China.

Thanks to their complementary trade structure, China and Bahrain saw their trade value surge 13.9 percent year-on-year to \$1.2 billion in 2022, data from China's General Administration of Customs showed.

China mainly ships construction machinery, new energy buses and passenger cars, vessels, manufacturing equipment, steel, textiles, furniture, computers, smartphones, garments and household appliances to Bahrain.

In addition to petroleum products and natural gas, the Middle Eastern country's exports to China include a variety of goods such as aluminum ingots, chemical products, mechanical appliances and spices.

Over the years, as Bahrain began its diversification journey, China and Bahrain signed numerous agreements, protocols and memorandums of understanding to reinforce their partnership and collaboration across all fields, according to information released by the embassy of Bahrain in China.

As China and Bahrain boost their efforts to enhance their partnership in mutually beneficial sectors like transportation and energy projects, these endeavors are set to expand and deepen economic cooperation, said Nie Pingxiang, a research fellow at the Beijing-based Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation.

Apart from the conventional focus on trade and investment,

predominantly concentrated in the energy and natural resource sectors, Nie highlighted that these initiatives will encompass a wider array of fields. This expansion will encompass domains like the green economy, 5G technology, artificial intelligence, big data and aviation.

Terminus Group, a Beijing-headquartered AI services provider, plans to deploy more resources to develop markets in the Middle East, especially in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE. It had already established a regional branch with more than 300 engineers and sales staff in Dubai in 2020.

Victor Ai, founder and CEO of Terminus Group, said that as many Middle Eastern countries strive to advance in eco-friendly energy, manufacturing and smart city initiatives, his company aims to fully capitalize on its AIoT (artificial intelligence of things) strength to engage in related-projects in these markets and contribute to regional prosperity.



# Q&A WITH CEO

**Editor's note:** With strong policy support, unrelenting technological innovation and industrial upgrading, China's economic recovery continued to gather steam in the third quarter, with its GDP expanding by 4.9 percent from a year earlier, leading to a 5.2-percent year-on-year

growth in the first three quarters. China Daily presents a series of Q&As with top multinational corporation executives, discussing their perspectives on the Chinese economy and how they will position future business in China.

## Healthcare MNCs bullish on Chinese modernization



**Pavol Dobrocky**

president and CEO of  
Boehringer Ingelheim Greater China



**Allan Gabor**

president of Merck China



**Dong Minsheng**

executive chairman of the board of  
directors, CEO of Menarini China



**Sean Shan**

senior vice-president of Takeda,  
president of Takeda China



**Alexandre Moreau**

president of UCB China

**Q1** Given the complex current global economic and geopolitical situations, how do you position the Chinese market in your overall global business radar? What's your outlook for China's economy and your company's operations in the country for this year and next?

**DOBROCKY:** Despite current uncertainties, our outlook for the Chinese market in the long run remains unchanged. Boehringer Ingelheim sees China as a focus market and a source of innovation. We have a firm belief in the potential and resilience of the Chinese market and appreciate the continuous improvement of the business environment. Going forward, we hope to see a robust Chinese economy in the context of further opening-up policies that will facilitate more cross-border business interaction and increase local demand.

With our China Key strategy, which enables our active participation in the early phase of global studies, we expect similar regulatory approvals in China. In animal health, more than 15 new products and new indications will be approved in China in the next five years, covering key species of livestock and companion animals. With such an innovative pipeline, we hope to contribute to China's healthcare industry and benefit many patients and customers.

**GABOR:** Over the last decade, Merck has invested nearly 6 billion yuan (\$820 million) in China. Today, China is our second-largest market with approximately 3 billion euros (\$3.2 billion) in sales last year. The global economic and geopolitical situation is evolving with great complexity. To us, there is no alternative to free trade and no global world without China.

In 2023, China set its GDP growth target at around 5 percent, once again injecting impetus into global economic recovery. I believe in the marvelous "China speed" and its growth momentum, which is driven by unremitting efforts to embrace high-quality development through a Chinese path to modernization.

This June, Merck invested about 70 million euros to expand the Nantong life sciences center to increase its high-purity reagent production capacity, which is expected to be operational by 2026. As for our electronics sector, we have announced a growth plan to further invest at least 1 billion yuan in China by 2025 to enhance our localized manufacturing, technology and supply chain capabilities.

**DONG:** China is one of Menarini Group's top growth markets. The top management and board of directors of the group are strongly convinced that China is and will continue to be one of the most strategic growth drivers for Menarini at the global level. Menarini is investing in China and is committed to continuing this effort and development for the Chinese market in the long term.

We have witnessed the strong resilience and tremendous potential of China's economy since the beginning of this year. The long-term positive fundamentals remain unchanged, as does Menarini's commitment to China. We will deepen our presence in the Chinese market through ongoing innovation, in-depth partnerships, localization strategies, digital transformation and active involvement in China's public health administration to achieve our longer-term development goals.

From new pipelines to digital transformation, we are striving to accelerate the introduction of innovative drugs to China. On the other hand, we are continuously exploring new technologies and models in the field of healthcare to meet the growing needs of Chinese patients and to help the country achieve its high-quality development goals.

**SHAN:** We believe that China will continue building on its commitment to bringing the best medicine to its citizens and as such, China is a strategically important market for Takeda. We are confident that the fundamentals of the healthcare industry remain strong and are delighted to see the government accelerate the path to China's high-quality economic development.

Last year, Takeda announced a strategic development plan which aims to unleash our full potential in the China market. We delivered strong results last year and will further engage in the integration and co-creation within China's health industry ecosystem. In addition, the digital transformation of the Chinese healthcare industry is accelerating — which will continue shaping the future of our industry with opportunities for new solutions for patients and service providers. We've been investing in data and digital technology as a core capability to ensure we stay competitive in the future. By working with Chinese companies that have demonstrated world-class leadership in digitalization, we hope to provide patients and healthcare providers with digital tools that give them more control over their lives and work.

**MOREAU:** As the second-largest healthcare market globally with about one-fifth of the world's population, China undoubtedly deserves the world's attention. However, it's not just the size of the market amplified by the number of people, but also the new impetus of innovation and commitment to high-quality development and high-standard opening-up that make China appealing to all innovation-driven companies.

After being active in the Chinese market for 27 years, UCB has been opening a new direction of "China for China and China for the world". In this exciting and rapidly evolving market, we are constantly reinterpreting it and updating our corporate strategy to seize the moment.

I have always believed that the Chinese market will be successful, and the global market will be more successful as a result. If you are not actually standing on the land, you can only understand China as a big market with a big population. Only when you are actually here, can you get a deep sense of the dynamism of the market.

No global company can ignore the Chinese market because the next cutting-edge technology is likely to come from China.

**Q2** China's economic policymakers have assured greater efforts to attract foreign capital, widen market access and ensure a level playing field for both domestic and foreign companies. In this context, what new policy measures do you expect from Chinese authorities in the near future?

**DOBROCKY:** We are encouraged to see a stream of government policies that aim to improve the business environment in different dimensions — including the newly released 24 measures to attract foreign investment — which cover areas such as fair competition, tax incentives, and research and development support. We hope these measures can fully leverage China's market advantages and are implemented in a timely, coordinated and consistent manner to further boost confidence.

In particular, we are expecting continuous reform to ensure a level playing field for all market actors and policies improving the ease of doing business. We hope our investment in innovation can be rewarded through reasonable mechanisms of pricing and intellectual property rights protection. If business innovation is not properly rewarded, enterprises will lose the incentive to innovate. These will allow multinational companies' innovation outcomes to benefit patients in both China and around the world.

**GABOR:** Despite uncertainties and challenges in the post-pandemic era, China embraces foreign direct investment and is continuously rolling out measures and policies that facilitate multinational companies to deepen their footprint in the country. In my opinion, that practical approach is the precious certainty in an uncertain world.

We continue to pay attention to the process of incorporating targeted tumor drugs into the national essential medicines list — including gene testing for targeted tumor therapy added to national medical insurance, further optimization of China's medical policies on assisted reproduction, institutionalized thyroid screening for women of childbearing age and digital whole-course diabetes management. We also anticipate further Customs approval facilitations for importing key materials for biosafety testing and pharmaceutical research.

Our long-term concerns and advocacy also lie in the further expansion of investment subsidies and incentives for MNCs, equal market access and competition for domestic and foreign enterprises in the process of government procurement activities and the participation of foreign corporations in formulating relevant industry standards.

To some extent, the guidelines issued on Aug 13 by the State Council have addressed Merck's development needs and long-term concerns, but we anticipate concrete measures for policy implementation to be applied across China as soon as possible.

**DONG:** In recent years, China has adopted a series of policy reforms and institutional innovations in the field of healthcare, resulting in a thriving industry, a more dynamic market and a fair arena for all players regardless of whether they are local companies or MNCs. This also provides good opportunities for Menarini, so that we can launch new and innovative medicines in China more quickly, meet the needs of Chinese patients as early as possible and include these medicines in more medical and healthcare insurance programs.

We hope China will further open up its market access to essential medical products and further improve its health insurance payment mechanism for smart and digital healthcare. We are willing to participate in this process and work with the government and stakeholders to increase access for patients to innovative solutions to invigorate lives in China.

**SHAN:** In recent years, China has introduced a series of measures to continuously optimize the business environment, providing institutional safeguards for multinational corporations investing in China.

Most recently, the State Council released a document outlining opinions on further optimizing the foreign investment environment and increasing foreign investment, which includes several provisions relevant to the healthcare sector, such as encouraging foreign-invested enterprises to conduct clinical trials of cell and gene therapy drugs that have already been listed overseas within China. Another example is the release of another document outlining opinions on strengthening intellectual property rights in the field of centralized pharmaceutical procurement.

These are all very encouraging for healthcare companies like Takeda. We look forward to their implementation to accelerate the process of bringing more innovative therapies to the Chinese market.

**MOREAU:** I chose to come to China on my own initiative and I particularly insisted on coming at this time. In my business sense, I think it's the best time — it's a time of opportunity. It's not just the vastness of the place, but also the energy of innovation.

We appreciate the actions the Chinese government has been taking to further encourage and support meaningful innovations to come in a safe and sound environment and in line with international standards.

We are not only focusing on cooperation opportunities with innovative pharmaceutical companies, but also exploring opportunities for industry-academia-research cooperation to find the next frontier.

**Q3** As China continues to pursue high-quality development through a homegrown path to modernization, what is the vision for your company's business in the country over the long run? What business opportunities do you foresee emerging as part of the process of Chinese modernization?

**DOBROCKY:** China positions innovation at the heart of its modernization drive and is striving to build cutting-edge technologies, spur economic growth, meet the country's critical needs and improve people's health by implementing an innovation-driven growth strategy. The strategic focus on innovation also helps global healthcare companies capitalize on the huge potential of China's market. People's urgent need for innovative products, health services and demand for animal health solutions underpin the biggest opportunities for Boehringer Ingelheim in China.

Looking into the future, leading in digitalization remains a higher priority than ever. Boehringer Ingelheim has elevated digital transformation to a strategic level to tap its potential. We will continue to deploy the latest advances in digitalization in development, clinical trials and commercialization, to help create differentiated value for patients and customers and contribute to the shaping of a robust digital innovation ecosystem.

We will continue to cultivate the Chinese market and work with partners to promote open innovation and contribute to the high-quality development of China's healthcare industry.

**GABOR:** Merck's three business sectors — life science, healthcare and electronics — align with China's industry priorities in realizing steady and sustainable high-quality development. On its unique path to modernization, China has increasing needs in the areas of healthcare, high-quality food and drugs, environmental protection solutions and the digital economy, where Merck is in a sweet spot to continuously contribute with our innovative products and services.

We have accelerated our innovation strategy accordingly and are rapidly bringing global pipeline assets to China. We also see the great potential of integrating into the vibrant local innovation ecosystem to better serve patients and tap into the next wave of growth. Our life science products and services are helping Chinese pharmaceutical companies develop innovative medicines and life-saving vaccines.

Digitalization is another important pillar of Chinese-style modernization where we foresee opportunities for revenue growth. Furthermore, we are also in a strong position to offer various green solutions to the market.

**DONG:** The Chinese government has given strategic priority to people's health and positioned healthcare as fundamental to China's modernization and its "sense of fulfillment, happiness and security for Chinese people". As their average living standards and average life expectancy increase, the Chinese people have higher expectations for quality of life. On the other hand, they could face more health challenges as there are still a lot of unmet medical needs.

As a result, China is not only one of the fastest-growing markets for Menarini, but will remain one of our most important strategic growth engines globally. To this end, Menarini will stay flexible. We will continue to invest in innovation and improve the quality and clinical value of our offerings to meet more medical needs. At the same time, Menarini will actively participate in the construction of China's healthcare ecosystem, drive digital healthcare and health management, and provide more comprehensive and intelligent medical solutions for Chinese patients. Besides, we want to achieve win-win results with local companies, advance the innovation and growth of the pharmaceutical industry, improve China's medical capabilities and ultimately benefit the country's people.

**SHAN:** The healthcare industry is undergoing innovation-led transformation and accelerating its convergence with international standards. We are pleased to see that the central government's strong commitment to improving the quality of life and health equity for its people will lead the path to the country's modernization. Innovation is rewarding and will lead to the high-quality development of the healthcare industry in China, which is fully in line with Takeda's aspirational plan to make China the second-largest market globally by 2030. More importantly, we believe China has the potential to be the source of global innovation in the biopharmaceutical industry. Along the way, Chinese talent will showcase their full capabilities and lifelong learning to become the engine of global talent.

**MOREAU:** In the long term, we want to ride the wave of China's fast and booming innovation development. China's current innovation capability is not just "fast-following and then making it faster and pricing it lower", but it is the right time and the right people to produce meaningful innovations. The next frontier of cutting-edge technology is likely to come from China. UCB is flexible, agile and quick to adapt due to our focused approach and medium size, which allows us to better grasp opportunities. The future has not yet fully unfolded and no one can predict it. But this is where the opportunities lie.



# COMMENT

## Editorials

### Instead of suffering, foreign businesses will gain from revised anti-espionage act

Since the revised Counter-Espionage Law took effect on July 1, an increasing number of foreign businesses operating in China have raised concerns that the law may expand the definition of espionage activities and, as a result, their routine business activities could become suspect in the eyes of law.

Such worries are unnecessary, given that China is a country ruled by law, where the rights and interests of all foreign enterprises and individuals are fully protected so long as they do not breach the country's laws and regulations. Only those who do not understand the revised law or have ulterior motives would suggest that the country's business environment is getting worse because of the implementation of the law.

But despite that, the authorities have been trying to clear the doubts of enterprises and individuals. It's another matter that the misunderstandings and doubts are the result of malicious misinterpretations of the law by some foreign media outlets.

On Tuesday, the Ministry of State Security once again refuted the groundless claim that foreign entities and individuals, especially those in sensitive sectors such as high-tech and research, face increased risks in China due to the revised law.

Rather than being vague and opaque, as some foreign media have claimed it to be, the provisions of the Counter-Espionage Law are transparent, the

ministry said on its WeChat account. The ministry also said that China's business environment for foreign companies, instead of becoming worse, has actually improved by, among other things, becoming more law-based, predictable and transparent.

Foreign businesses' confidence in the Chinese market has kept rising, as evidenced in the increase in newly established foreign-invested enterprises this year. According to the Ministry of Commerce, more than 33,000 new foreign entities were established in China in the first eight months, an increase of 33 percent year-on-year. It is hard to imagine market-savvy foreign companies flocking to a country deemed risky.

According to a survey conducted by the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade in May, 97 percent of foreign companies operating in China said they were satisfied with the country's policy for boosting foreign investment, which was rolled out in the fourth quarter of last year. That more than 70 percent of the respondents in the survey said they would further localize or maintain the status quo speaks volumes of their intention to expand business operations in China.

Espionage compromises a country's national security and hurts its economy. And strengthening laws such as the anti-espionage law is the right of any sovereign country's government. What China has done to safeguard its national interests and security therefore is beyond reproach.

### Manila should not sleepwalk into a crisis

The Philippines, it appears, has mistaken China's restraint against its provocative actions over the Ren'ai Reef as Beijing's weakness, perhaps because of the United States' promised support in case of a crisis. But the Philippines should be under no illusion that when push comes to shove, nothing can stop China from safeguarding its sovereignty over the reef.

The Philippines deliberately grounded a World War II-era warship on the reef in 1999 with the aim of asserting its unfounded claim over the islets. But it should not heighten tensions, while ignoring China's resolve to safeguard its maritime territory, in the hope of taking advantage of the situation to claim the reef, perhaps with the US' promised support.

On Sunday, Philippine vessels approached China Coast Guard ships in a dangerous manner near the reef, which is part of China's Nansha Islands, leading to a couple of dangerous collisions, prompting experts to warn that more aggressive actions by the Philippines could cause more serious collisions, leading to a conflict.

After the collisions, Manila condemned Beijing in the "strongest terms". Lashing on to the "condemnation", some Western countries, led by the US, threw their weight behind the Philippines while

portraying China as a "bully".

Since taking office last year, Philippine President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. has chosen to embrace the US and become a piece on its geopolitical chessboard. And with the US' false promise of support, his government has been constantly taking provocative actions vis-a-vis the Ren'ai Reef.

To serve its own narrow geopolitical goals, the US has been peddling a false narrative that Manila is the victim and is standing up to the so-called "China bully". When the fact is that it is the Philippines that has infringed on China's sovereignty and territorial integrity by illegally grounding the warship on China's reef and stationing troops there. And given that the warship is rotting fast and may sink in the near future, Manila, backed by the US, has expedited efforts to repair it, raising tensions in the waters.

Manila's illegal moves cannot be justified by any international law. On the other hand, China is justified and has the legal right to remove the Philippine warship. Moreover, Manila should be warned that its brinkmanship over the Ren'ai Reef is tantamount to sleepwalking into a crisis. This is a time to be extremely cautious, as any strategic miscalculation or misstep risks causing a conflict, especially because China will resolutely defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

### Neighborhood diplomacy not an expediency

The international symposium on China's neighborhood diplomacy Beijing hosted on Tuesday, marking the 10th anniversary of its neighborhood diplomacy principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, shows the great importance China attaches to nurturing good relations with its neighbors.

With political figures and diplomats from neighboring countries, heads of some international and regional organizations, diplomats and some well-known experts attending the symposium in person or via video link, the event became a platform for in-depth exchange of views on issues such as good neighborliness, sincerity, mutual benefit, openness and inclusiveness.

Neighborhood diplomacy has always been high on China's agenda as evidenced by the win-win economic and trade cooperation between China and its neighbors, which has brought tremendous tangible benefits to the people on all sides over the decades.

In 2022, China's goods trade with neighboring countries exceeded \$2.17 trillion, up 78 percent from 2012. Also, China took the lead in ratifying the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, boosting regional economic integration. This shows that neighborhood diplomacy is not an expediency for China to counter the United States' China-containment strategy. It is part of its overall diplomacy.

Importantly, relations between China and its neighbors are based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and noninterference in each other's

internal affairs, and not targeted against any third party.

As for the differences between them, including maritime disputes, China and its neighbors both are committed to resolving them through negotiations and dialogues.

With their concerted efforts, the Asia-Pacific has become not only a driver of global growth but also a model of good neighborly relations. So, only a country that puts its own interests above those of others and believes in zero-sum games, as the US does, would consider China's good relations with neighbors as a thorn in its side, and seek to exploit their divergences to create trouble in the region.

Therefore, the regional countries should be wary of the hidden motives of countries such as the US, because accepting their conditions would mean falling victim to their military bullying, economic sanctions and diplomatic coaxing, which could force them to suffer more. They should therefore uphold their strategic autonomy, and avoid being embroiled in major country confrontations.

As it stressed at the symposium, Beijing will promote amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, so that the modernization of China brings more benefits to its neighbors.

A key message the symposium sent out to the world is that China will continue to work with regional partners to jointly advance Asia's modernization process, and make sure the country's high-quality development and a peaceful and stable neighborhood environment reinforce and complement China and the other countries in the region.

Cai Meng



## Opinion Line

### Measures need to be taken to ensure national bonds are used as required

China's top legislature has approved the central government's plan to issue an additional 1 trillion yuan (\$136.93 billion) in special treasury bonds in the fourth quarter. All of it will be allocated to local governments through transfer payment for supporting post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, making up for weak areas in disaster prevention and relief, and improving the overall ability to withstand natural disasters.

Since the beginning of this year, many places across China have been hit by heavy rains, floods, typhoons and other disasters. Such extreme weather events have been occurring frequently in recent years, necessitating the need to upgrade the country's disaster prevention preparedness. The central authorities met on Aug 17 and decided to further improve China's

disaster prevention, mitigation and relief capabilities.

However, this cannot be done without substantial funding support. Although China's budget at the beginning of the year covered conventional disaster prevention, reduction and relief funds, it is not enough to meet the needs of long-term and upgraded disaster prevention, reduction and relief. In order to implement the deployment of the Aug 17 meeting, the central government thus decided to issue the national bonds, raising the deficit-to-GDP ratio from 3 percent to 3.8 percent.

All necessary measures should be taken to ensure the issuance of these treasury bonds on schedule, and strengthen oversight to ensure the funds are used as required.

Considering that local governments have less room to significantly increase funding, the

issuance of the special treasury bonds is an important move to not only practice the people-centered development philosophy, but also help ease the pressure on local governments and optimize their expenditure and debt structure.

The use of these government debt funds will also help drive domestic demand and further consolidate the economic recovery.

Given that China's government debt ratio has been lower than other major economies, the Chinese government still has space to issue more national bonds, as the overall risk is still under control. The authorities will establish a regular supervision mechanism to closely monitor the use of national debt funds, and strictly investigate illegal activities such as funds misuse, to effectively prevent debt risks.

— XINHUA NEWS AGENCY

### Strictly implement pro-business policies

The State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a statement on Monday saying it plans to carry out a comprehensive inspection of the business environment, particularly for small and micro-sized private enterprises and businesses, in 16 provincial-level regions next month.

The authorities welcome feedback from various market entities through an online platform they have built for the mission.

Feedback is being sought on five main areas: obstacles to the development of the private economy, interference with the construction of a unified national market, factors impacting domestic demand expansion, obstacles to comprehensively promoting rural revitalization, and failure to properly protect and improve people's living conditions.

All of these five areas are major complaints of the private companies as well as the people, exposing the "weak spots" in governance and public services of the government.

Back in July and August, the central government had introduced a series of policies and measures to promote the development of the private enterprises. The State Council's latest move aims at effectively implementing those policies. It is clear that the central government is determined to remove obstacles to the development of private economy, as well as reduce the interferences from local governments and relevant departments on the market economy. That's why it turns to the public and the market directly for reports on practical problems this time.

Although many local govern-

ments emphasize the importance of the private economy echoing the central leadership, they often tend not to implement the central authorities' policies faithfully. Some of them like using punishment, fines and fees to replace service, supervision and regulation, while the market entities lack the means to safeguard their legal rights and interests. To improve the business environment has thus become an empty talk in some localities.

It is necessary to take strong measures to ensure pro-business policies are strictly implemented, so as to stabilize expectations. There should be an effective system to hold accountable those officials who compromise the central government's policies, especially those doing so for their own interests.

— BEIJING NEWS

## What They Say

### Five Eyes blind to own deeds, blame others

FBI Director Christopher Wray told the media on Sunday that the Five Eyes intelligence community regards China as the greatest espionage threat democracy has ever faced. The FBI chief's accusation, however, is not backed by facts; rather its goal is to smear China.

As Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said while answering a question on that at a regular news conference in Beijing on Monday, if any country or grouping poses a security threat to the world, it is the Five Eyes, which comprise the five English-speaking countries of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

At the same briefing, Mao Ning advised these countries to abandon the Cold War mentality and ideological bias, view China objectively, and stop smearing it. The advice,

most likely, fell on deaf ears, as the Five Eyes countries regard themselves exceptional as leaders of the "democratic" and "developed" world.

That means they consider themselves the masters of democracy and development, and all the achievements the latecomers to industrial development such as China have made in the fields of economy, technology and industry must have been stolen from them by taking advantage of the loopholes in the rules they set.

What makes it more ridiculous is that they genuinely believe it and, as a result, they have been desperately trying to contain China's development and isolate it from the rest of the world even if it would destabilize the global economy given the Chinese economy's integration with the global economy.

China wants to help build a world order that is fair, just and equal in order to bust the Western myth that developing countries can only be followers of the rules set by the West. While China fulfills its global responsibilities by promoting common development, the leaders of the "democratic world" are not leaving any stone unturned to check China's rise.

China remains committed to safeguarding international security. The Five Eyes intelligence network, the largest in the world, has been habitually concocting and spreading disinformation about China. The FBI chief should know that. But he will not speak because the developed world has abused its technological prowess to indiscriminately spy on countries globally, including its allies.

— LI YANG, CHINA DAILY

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COMMENT

Zhang Jie

Amity, inclusiveness foster friendly neighborhood

In October 2013, President Xi Jinping, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, put forward the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” for China’s neighborhood policy at a meeting on neighborhood diplomacy, the first such meeting to be held since the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

Over the past decade, this vision has served as a major guideline for the promotion and implementation of strategic initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, and the building of a community with a shared future in the neighborhood, which has contributed to a better neighborhood environment for China and greater stability and prosperity for the region. In the face of profound global changes unseen in a century, the vision, together with the implementation experience, remains relevant for regional peace, stability, development and prosperity.

First, the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” is a conceptual innovation based on decades of China’s neighborhood diplomacy.

The neighborhood is where China anchors to survive and thrive. The neighborhood is therefore always on top of China’s diplomatic agenda. Way back in 2013, President Xi stressed that the basic principle of China’s neighborhood diplomacy is to pursue friendship and partnership with our neighbors, help build an amicable, secure and prosperous neighborhood, and follow a neighborhood policy featuring amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness.

Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, successive central leaderships have attached great importance to neighborhood diplomacy and put forward a series of strategic visions and policies. Developing amicable and friendly relations with neighboring countries has always been high on China’s diplomatic agenda. Such policies were mainly practiced on the bilateral level before the mid-1980s, and began to gain in weight since the launch of reform and opening-up, when concepts like “close neighbor”, “neighboring country” and “neighbors facing each other across the sea” appeared increasingly in China’s diplomatic discourse, and “neighborhood countries” and “neighborhood relations” became an integral part of China’s overall diplomatic agenda.

Throughout this process, the term “neighbor” has not only referred to the geographical proximity between China and the countries that share the same mountains and rivers, and those with which China has had close contacts in history, but also represented the good-neighborly foreign policy, that is, basic principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and treating each other as equals. The good-neighborly foreign policy gradually developed into one that pursues friendship and partnership with neighbors, and culminates in the policy of fostering an amicable, secure, and prosperous neighborhood.

Under the guidance of these policies, China succeeded in normalizing relations with all neighboring countries, completing negotiations on the delimitation of most of its land borders, and properly handling territorial disputes and issues over maritime rights and interests.

In addition, China has used the establishment of China-ASEAN dialogue as a starting point to build the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area, promote East Asian cooperation together with Japan, the Republic of Korea and Southeast Asian countries, and played a leading role in the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. By 2010, China and its neighbors had jointly built the Asia-Pacific region into a new center of economic growth and forged a peaceful and stable neighborhood.

In the new era, China’s neighborhood

strategy and work faced new challenges as the neighborhood underwent profound changes. It was against this backdrop that in 2013, for the first time in the history of the People’s Republic, the meeting on neighborhood diplomacy was held where the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” in neighborhood diplomacy made its debut. It is fair to say that this is a core concept, embodying the Chinese vision of neighborhood diplomacy, which had been taking shape over decades of neighborhood diplomacy.

Second, the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” opens up new channels to promote China’s neighborhood diplomacy.

Around 2013, many new visions of China’s neighborhood diplomacy were put forward, including the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness”, the building of an Asian community with a shared future, the Belt and Road Initiative, and the new vision on security.

Each of the four elements, that is, amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness, comes from the long-term practice of neighborhood diplomacy. But when they come together and become one single policy for improving neighborhood diplomacy, they become an integrated one, playing a guiding role in the promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative, the implementation of the new vision on security, and the development of relations with sub-regions in the neighborhood.

Amity is about peaceful relations, about friendship and closeness among countries. It has roots in people-to-people friendship but now increasingly applies to countries. It lays stress on not only diplomacy by heads

of state or political parties, but also social exchanges and interactions. As the saying goes, “the people’s heart holds the key to relations between countries”. This is in line with Belt and Road people-to-people connectivity. It also serves as the foundation for a community with a shared future in the neighborhood.

Sincerity emphasizes that in exchanges with others, people be true to their words, and countries live up to their promises. This relates to China’s long-standing diplomatic emphasis on building political and strategic mutual trust, which is a prerequisite for regional cooperation and an important guarantee for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The promotion of regional economic cooperation and proper handling of the South China Sea issue between China and some Southeast Asian countries are examples of this principle in practice.

Mutual benefit reflects China’s long-standing principle of win-win cooperation and reciprocity, which is a successful experience in regional cooperation between China and its neighbors, and also the “ballast” for their stable relations. Following this principle, China has forged a network of common interests with its neighbors to bring them closer, enable them to share the dividends of China’s development, and also to benefit itself from the common development of its neighbors.

Inclusiveness advocates a tolerant and open mind as well as openness in regional cooperation, and inclusiveness in the regional order. This echoes the Association of Southeast Asian Nations’ call for an open, inclusive and cooperative regional order, and is different from the “Indo-Pacific” strategy of a certain country that is

designed to create bloc confrontation. Openness and inclusiveness are fundamental guarantees for the sustainability of regional cooperation.

In the decade since the initiation of the vision of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness”, China has developed good-neighborly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation with its neighbors. China’s visions for development and diplomacy are increasingly recognized and accepted by more countries, as is shown by the synergy forged between the Belt and Road Initiative and the development policies of neighboring countries, the completion of Belt and Road signature projects, and the development of “small yet smart” people-centered programs.

China is in the process of reaching a consensus with more neighbors on building a community with a shared future, and the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative are winning more recognition in the neighborhood.

At a time when the neighboring environment is undergoing major changes and the region stands at a crossroad between cooperation and confrontation, the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” is of even greater significance for China to forge a consensus on development, focus on regional growth, and jointly build an open, inclusive and interconnected world of common development with small and medium-sized countries in the region.

Third, we need to uphold the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness”, and promote the implementation of the three global initiatives in the neighborhood first.

The vision of neighborhood diplomacy is an important part of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy. In the next stage, it is important that China further enriches the “Chinese vision” for regional peace, stability, development and prosperity, aimed at building a stable, harmonious, developing and prosperous Asian community with a shared future. Taking the implementation of the GDI, the GSI and the GCI as the right path, and, guided by the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” in policies, China can work with small and medium-sized countries in the region to shape a new regional order.

In order to promote the implementation of the GDI, China should strive to reach a regional consensus on development, and strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries in key areas under the GDI, including climate change, the green economy and the digital economy, scientific and technological innovations, while continuing to deepen and expand cooperation with its neighbors.

To facilitate the implementation of the GSI, China, while safeguarding its national security, should strengthen political and strategic mutual trust with regional small and medium-sized countries, taking into consideration their legitimate security concerns. The differences and disputes between countries should be peacefully resolved through dialogue and consultation, and both traditional and nontraditional security should be safeguarded. Also, continued efforts should be made to better safeguard national security through the development of sustainable security with Chinese characteristics.

As for implementing the GCI, China has a large number of neighbors that have different national conditions and cultures, practice different religions and belong to different ethnic groups. On the basis of mutual respect for each other’s values, China should seek a common ground with its neighbors while shelving and/or narrowing the differences, while pursuing common values, sharing more governance experiences, following different paths to modernization, and working together to promote the cultural development and harmonious coexistence in a joint pursuit of a community with a shared future in the neighborhood.

In the layout of China’s diplomacy, major countries are the “key” and neighboring countries the priority in promoting neighborhood diplomacy. At a time when the United States’ “Indo-Pacific” strategy is aimed at reshaping China’s strategic environment as its main goal, the “key” in China’s diplomacy overlaps with its “priority”, giving more importance to the neighboring area. More importantly, from the perspective of building a community with a shared future for mankind, China’s national interests are increasingly bound together with those of other countries.

Also, as China grows in national strength, it is increasingly necessary for it to contribute more to regional peace and stability. This means China needs to not only do a good job of running its own affairs, but also follow the principle of “amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness” in its neighborhood diplomacy, take both domestic and international situations into consideration, and prioritize the implementation of the GDI, the GSI and the GCI in its neighborhood.

This is both feasible and exemplary, and could serve as a beacon for China and small and medium-sized countries to jointly build an open, cooperative and inclusive international order.

*The author is a researcher at the Institute of Asia-Pacific and Global Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The views don’t necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



LI MIN / CHINA DAILY

Mei Xinyu

Israel-Palestine conflict likely to snowball and hit global economy

The Israel-Palestine conflict, which threatens to turn into a larger conflict involving multiple players, is likely to have multiple short- and medium-term effects on the global and regional economies.

Neither Israel nor Palestine is a significant oil and gas producer. Nor are their immediate neighbors — Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt — major oil and gas producers or exporters. As long as the conflict does not directly involve major oil and gas producing countries in the Gulf region, it will not affect the actual oil and gas production capacity in the region.

What affects the price of oil and gas in international markets is mainly the plans of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and other oil and gas producing economies. After its expiration at the end of this year, the plans to reduce the additional production of crude oil will continue to determine the oil and gas prices in the international markets for the next year or

so. The attitude and role of Saudi Arabia in the scheme of things will, however, remain the most significant factor.

However, whether Saudi Arabia will continue to reduce its crude oil production depends to a large extent on the normalization of Riyadh-Tel Aviv relations as well as US-Saudi Arabia ties.

If the US agrees to meet key Saudi Arabian demands and continues to press Saudi Arabia to formalize relations with Israel, there is a high probability that Riyadh will agree to abandon its oil output reduction plan by the end of the year. However, with the outbreak of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the comprehensive suspension of talks on the normalization of Saudi Arabia-Israel relations is expected to last for a considerable period of time, increasing the probability of Riyadh extending the oil production reduction plan.

If oil and gas prices continue to be high in the international markets, inflation in

most economies, including in the United States and European Union member states, will remain high or even increase, and their monetary policies will continue to swing between “suppressing inflation” and “stabilizing growth”.

As for the US and the EU, their “re-industrialization” process might be blocked, with the cost of investment in capital-intensive industries, such as chips and electric vehicles manufacturing, continuing to increase due to high interest rates and labor costs. The debt servicing cost might also increase due to the high interest rates.

The high oil prices and interest rates in the international market will inflict more pain on non-oil-producing countries. Yet the US dollar will remain strong against non-oil-producing economies’ currencies, with the high interest rates causing their currencies to remain weak against the US dollar, or even depreciate significantly.

Consequently, the prices of their imported goods and services denominated

in the US dollar will rise more sharply after being translated into local currencies, and the inflationary pressure on them will be far greater than that on the US or European countries. Also, the pressure of cross-border capital flight will remain high.

Due to extreme weather events, the yield in major grain producing areas in East Asia may be less than usual, and the autumn grain harvest in China may not be as good as expected. This will cause grain prices to rise further in international markets, and inflationary pressure to increase in several countries.

As the world’s largest manufacturing country, China still faces relatively low inflation pressure, but against the backdrop of soaring oil prices and huge external inflationary pressure, China will gradually feel the pressure of imported inflation, especially in the first and second quarters of next year. Continuing to import oil and gas from Russia, Iran and

other US-sanctioned countries at prices lower than in the global market can only help ease the imported inflationary pressure. This will further shrink the space for China to stabilize growth by easing its monetary policy.

Furthermore, if the US’ interest rates continue to be high, due to high external inflation pressure, the pressure on the yuan’s exchange rate and China’s stock market will be difficult to ease.

And given the continuous pressure of capital flight, China, which is struggling to develop its high-tech industries after the US imposed restrictions on the exports of high-tech products, especially semiconductors to China, should take measures to prevent the flight of capital in bulk.

*The author is a researcher at the Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation. The views don’t necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



## GLOBAL VIEWS



WANG XIAOYING / CHINA DAILY

DJOOMART OTORBAEV

## Modernization is key

The pace of investment in China's innovation economy is quickly picking up

China's focus on modernization and high-quality development, along with its efforts to simplify fiscal and monetary policies for research and development, have yielded positive economic results, creating high-quality jobs. Earlier this year, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued a circular directing relevant departments and regional authorities to support the establishment of cutting-edge R&D centers throughout the country. As a result, both domestic and foreign investors have shifted their attention from a "Made in China" to a "Created in China" approach, demonstrating their commitment through tangible actions. Alongside the development of modern manufacturing facilities, advanced R&D centers are being built nationwide, fostering innovative solutions.

According to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Sept 18, China's investment in R&D increased by 10.1 percent in 2022 to reach 3.08 trillion yuan (\$421.97 billion), continuing the trend of accelerated growth. The threshold of 1 trillion yuan for R&D investment was surpassed in 2012 and 2 trillion yuan in 2019. It means that it only took three years to increase investment from 2 trillion yuan to 3 trillion yuan, demonstrating the effectiveness of China's innovation development strategy.

The positive trend in high-tech investment will continue as the country's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) projects that the country should increase R&D spending by more than 7 percent annually during the period. A report by McKinsey showed that such a growth target would put the country on track to become the world's largest in terms of R&D spending.

Such measures are essential for creating new high-quality jobs, as the country prioritizes creating employment opportunities, especially for young people. For example, by the middle of this year, the unemployment rate for people aged 16 to 24 in urban areas reached 21.3 percent, the highest since 2018. To address this problem, the government has promised several initiatives to support private businesses, which typically employ a large proportion of the younger workforce.

According to the China Employment Research Institute and online recruitment platform Zhaopin, the CIER index, a key indicator of China's labor mar-

**It is becoming more evident that economic development in the country should focus on modernization and high-quality development. This approach must continue to expand and deepen for a better future.**

ket, stood at 0.57 in Q3 of 2022, a decline from 1.24 in 2021 and 1.38 in 2020. A figure below 1 means there are more job applicants than market demand, suggesting challenging job competition and low job-seeker confidence.

Making significant strides in enhancing the investment environment and creating fresh employment opportunities is imperative to tackling the nation's major issues. To assess the current situation in these areas, it is essential to review the best practices that were recently implemented. Let us take a closer look at some of these examples.

The country's leading auto company, BYD, hired 31,800 new college graduates this year. But what is particularly noteworthy is the quality of new jobs. Of those new hires, 61.3 percent have master's or doctoral degrees, and 80.8 percent have been employed within the R&D field. Around 700 to 800 are from top Chinese universities such as Peking University and Tsinghua University.

The company planned to recruit new employees in 37 cities across 50 different job categories, including specialties like automation, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and information technology. The initial monthly wage for these roles can go up to 50,000 yuan. Based on the official information, the company is collaborating on scientific projects and providing training for prospective employees in 14 different fields at 16 postdoctoral programs. These efforts involve partnerships with esteemed institutions like the Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology of the Chinese Acad-

emy of Sciences, China University of Science and Technology and Tsinghua University. In the last two decades, the company has set up 11 research institutes and allocated over 100 billion yuan for R&D.

China is renowned for its rapidly growing local high-tech companies. However, foreign investors also strive to keep up with their local counterparts. Toyota Motor Corporation announced on July 31 the plan to combine its R&D resources in China, focusing on creating the latest electric vehicles. Engineers from its three Chinese factories will be transferred to a new research institute in Changshu, Jiangsu province, where the main priority will be the development of battery, hybrid and plug-in hybrid models.

There are many other examples of global investments in the R&D industry in China. In February, LG Chem Ltd opened a technology center in Wuxi, Jiangsu province, which cost \$30 million. The Volkswagen Group has established a technology firm in Hefei, Anhui province, for new energy innovation and intelligent connected vehicles. Unilever has opened an R&D facility in Tianjin, utilizing China's smart manufacturing technology to improve production speed and transportation efficiency. Danfoss, the global refrigeration giant, has opened its most advanced and largest research and testing center for scroll compressors in Tianjin. Other companies such as Xylem, Schneider Electric and Volvo have also established their R&D centers in China to leverage the country's innovative capabilities and diverse industrial talent.

These examples show that the digital and high-tech sectors of the economy are proliferating. They drive economic growth, create highly skilled jobs, and increase the country's budget revenues. It is becoming more evident that economic development in the country should focus on modernization and high-quality development. This approach must continue to expand and deepen for a better future.

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LIANG GUOYONG

## Mapping a digital future

Global digital trade rulemaking and China's new policy options

In the context of the rapid digitization of the world economy, the governance of the digital economy has increasingly become a topic of common concern for the international community. In the field of international trade, the inclusion of provisions on e-commerce in free trade agreements is increasingly common. Almost all new agreements signed over the past few years have included those provisions. In the meantime, relevant concepts are transforming from e-commerce toward digital trade. Digital trade refers to trading activities through electronic means via the internet, covering trade in both goods and services. Specifically, digital trade is all international trade that is digitally ordered and/or digitally delivered.

A global rules architecture for digital trade is taking shape, as relevant negotiations at all levels have been making progress. First, the principle that no tax should be imposed on e-commerce was adopted at the WTO in 1998 and relevant plurilateral negotiations started in 2019. Second, at the regional level, alongside the signing of a number of large-scale free trade agreements including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), rules on digital trade (e-commerce) have become increasingly important. Third, at the bilateral level, digital trade rules are gradually improving as well.

Furthermore, there emerges a new trend of specialization in the global governance of digital trade, with some innovative agreements specially designed for digital trade and economy. For instance, initiated in May 2019 and signed in June 2020 by Singapore, Chile and New Zealand, the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA) is the world's first "digital only" regional trade and economic agreement.

As the leader of the global digital economy, the US tops the world in terms of the overall size and competitiveness of its digital sector. The country has demonstrated the aspiration for taking a leadership role in the global regulatory sphere for digital trade.

In particular, the US emphasizes on achieving "strong, binding rules" on digital trade in its negotiations, and strives to sign digital trade agreements that are as comprehensive and high-standard as possible. This reflects both its intention of improving the institutional framework for digital trade and its goals of promoting market access, achieving digital trade liberalization and increasing the exports of US digital services. The content and details of a new type of digital trade agreements led by the US are reflected in the US-Japan Digital Trade Agreement and the 19th chapter of the USMCA — they represent a "US model" of

digital trade agreements.

China has a digital sector second only to that of the US in terms of its overall size and competitiveness. The Chinese government is actively participating in digital economy-related negotiations at multilateral mechanisms and international organizations and aims to promote the formulation of global rules concerning digital trade. Since 2015, all free trade agreements signed by China have included a special chapter for e-commerce.

China is a member of the RCEP and has filed an application to join the CPTPP. The two important regional trade agreements both include an e-commerce chapter, presenting the new system of digital trade rules. It's worth noting that, in November 2021, China officially handed in the application to join the DEPA and set up a working group in August 2022 to advance talks on joining the agreement.

The EU's policy stance on digital trade is reflected in its modern bilateral trade agreements, of which the digital trade chapter and its almost 20 binding provisions represent a "EU model" of digital trade agreements.

In recent years, guided by the notion of "digital sovereignty for Europe", the EU has been strengthening its digital economy governance in all respects through legislative measures. It has passed the Digital Markets Act, the Digital Services Act and the Data Governance Act, as well as acts on chips and artificial intelligence. In the field of international trade, its policies particularly emphasize personal privacy protection, with stringent rules on the transfer of data to countries outside the EU.

Other major economies' policy stance is fairly diversified, with some accepting the EU and the US rules and others opting to formulate rules independently. Major developing economies, such as India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, are exploring digital trade rules and governance systems that are in line with their own economic interests.

Globally, the formulation of digital trade rules is faced with a number of challenges. Due to different positions of parties concerned, the cross-border transfer of information and the location of computing facilities might constitute a major obstacle to the formulation of global rules. The US-Japan Digital Trade Agreement, the DEPA and the CPTPP stipulate that public policy exceptions must not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade. In addition to that, the RCEP further includes exceptions regarding "essential security interests", which are not permitted to be disputed by signing parties.

The protection of personal information is an equally important issue. In the US, industry self-discipline

plays a central role. The EU, on the other hand, has opted for strict legislative supervision, as highlighted by the General Data Protection Regulation. In terms of market access, data flow restrictions, data localization requirements and cloud computing limitations are main barriers to digital trade in services.

China's rapidly expanding digital sector has played a crucial role in driving economic growth and social development. Meanwhile, cross-border e-commerce has become a new accelerator in China's foreign trade, accounting for a noticeably increasing share of Chinese exports. In face of the latest trends in the formulation of global digital trade rules, the Chinese government needs to explore new policy options.

To start with, China needs to formulate a strategy for the development of digital trade within the current frameworks of economic development, digitalization and trade policy. The strategy should include multi-faceted goals such as promoting the growth of digital trade, enhancing the competitiveness of digital industries, boosting the exports of small- and medium-sized enterprises, and protecting consumer rights. It should give an equal emphasis on trade in goods and services, and guide China's negotiations and consultations on the formulation of digital trade rules.

Second, given the importance of digital trade to the Chinese economy, China shall have a clear stance in all major areas of digital trade rules and gradually create a "Chinese model" agreement in line with its own economic interests and development needs. The cross-border transfer of information and the location of computing facilities might constitute a major challenge, and China needs to explicitly define its relevant restrictions in the area.

Lastly, China has the potential to take the lead in the formulation of digital trade rules and use it as an opportunity for advancing opening-up and digitalization. China's proactive participation will enable more progress in plurilateral negotiations on e-commerce and help formulate multilateral rules for digital trade. If breakthroughs could be made in negotiations on joining agreements like the DEPA, China can have a more favorable position in the rules-making process. Furthermore, Chinese government can consider initiating feasibility studies on digital trade and economic agreements with relevant trading partners, at the bilateral level.

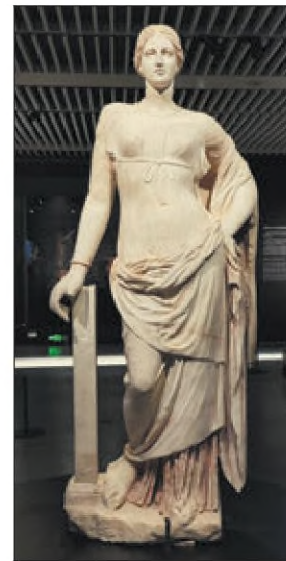
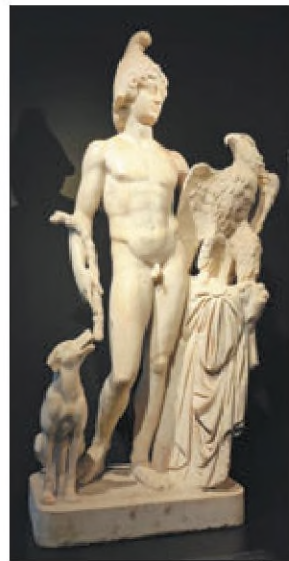
*The author is a senior economist at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. The views expressed in this article are those of the author only and do not necessarily represent those of the UNCTAD. The author contributed this article to China Watch, a think tank powered by China Daily. The views do not necessarily reflect those of China Daily.*



MA XUEJING / CHINA DAILY



## CULTURE



**Middle:** A visitor zooms in on a relief with Trojan prince Paris, his lover Helen and Aphrodite, from the first century AD, at the *Love, Luxury, and Beauty in Classical Antiquity* exhibition at the National Museum of Classic Books last month. It runs until mid-December. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY **Left and right:** Highlighted marble statues on show, *Ganymede and the Eagle*, second century AD, and *Aphrodite Marina*, first century AD. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

With its booming economy, plentiful resources, and astonishing urban and intellectual civilization, the city of Pompeii, which lies close to the Bay of Naples, was an ancient Roman provincial center with a population of between 10,000 and 20,000. Well, it was until one seemingly ordinary autumn day.

On Oct 24 in 79 AD, the violent eruption of nearby Mount Vesuvius killed thousands in this southern Italian city. Its era of prosperity ended in a matter of hours beneath a sulfurous sky. Other towns nearby, like Herculaneum and Oplontis, were also buried in an instant.

From tycoons with refined artistic taste to vulgar tavern goers, the merits and sins, happiness and sorrows of Pompeii's inhabitants were sealed for centuries, until a farmer accidentally stumbled across ancient Roman objects in the area in 1748.

What was later unearthed was more than just another tragic day in history, it was also a stunning trove of beauty.

The German poet Goethe toured Pompeii about 40 years after its ruins were rediscovered.

"Many disasters have befallen the world, but few have brought posterity so much joy."

That joy, despite its ambivalent nature, is now available to history lovers in Beijing. The exhibition *Love, Luxury, and Beauty in Classical Antiquity* opened at the National Museum of Classic Books in late September, and will run through to mid-December.

Including many relics recovered from volcanic ash, the 127 exhibits — statues, frescoes, painted pottery, bronze ware and glass — are on loan from the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, and will usher people back to an age that helped lay the foundations of Western civilization.

"Before being buried by the volcano, Pompeii was nurtured by Greek and Roman civilization," says Qian Qian, executive curator of the exhibition. "The city thus becomes an excellent means for us to understand them."

She says that Greek and Roman culture lives on today thanks to the passion and interest in Western classical civilization sparked by the rediscovery of Pompeii, which was also a unique event in the history of archaeology.

#### Portrayal of myths

Time has erased the names of the artists that made them, but the anonymity of these pieces does not diminish the immortality of their beauty.

Greek and Roman mythology is a key theme of the exhibition. The goddess of love and beauty is one of the highlights. *Aphrodite Marina*, a marble statue from the first century AD, vividly portrays the moment of the goddess' birth, as she steps elegantly out of the sea. That image had a lasting influence on Western art over the course of the following centuries, Qian says.

Another marble statue, *Ganymede and the Eagle*, may inspire people to remember Homer's description of the divine hero as "the loveliest born of the race of mortals", while the exquisitely carved relief, featuring Trojan prince Paris, his lover Helen, and Aphrodite, seems to keenly capture the moment that sparked the Trojan War, the classical inspiration for many other artistic masterpieces throughout European history.

"The flesh and blood of each mythical figure reveals the deep lay-

# Glimpses of the past link us to the future

Pompeii exhibition highlights value of understanding the achievements of ancient civilizations, Wang Kaihao reports.



**Top:** Visitors appreciate a statue of a satyr, a Greek deity, at the exhibition. JIANG DONG / CHINA DAILY **Above left:** A Dionysus-themed terracotta vase, from the fifth century BC. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY **Above center:** A bronze oil lamp from the first century AD. **Above right:** A first century AD fresco of a dancing maenad, or a priestess of the wine god. PHOTOS BY WANG KAIHAO / CHINA DAILY

ers and profound connotations of the grand theme of love," Qian explains. "Thus love, in its many different representations, occupies a central place in the ancient Greek and Roman systems of culture and thought."

Other than the worship of mighty deities, the exhibition also aims to present the Romans' love of the good life. Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and good times, who was known to the Romans as Bacchus, is probably the perfect reflection of earthly pleasures. His image is frequently found on painted pottery from Pompeii.

The god was also considered the

inventor of theater. As a sign of representation of humanity, theatrical performances in ancient Greece were an integral part of the festivals held in his honor, Qian adds.

The dinnerware, oil lamps, and garden decorations on display reflect a wider perspective of Roman life, but the most touching exhibit may be the reconstruction of a courtyard. Multimedia installations take visitors back to the time of the eruption, while the broken 2,000-year-old frescoes and marble components around the courtyard create an immersive experience, blurring the sense of time and space.

The exhibits in the courtyard are simple, a relief of a blacksmith and ordinary landscape paintings. They are not ostentatious, but their everyday appearances magnify the shock that eruption had upon what started out as an otherwise unremarkable day in Pompeii.

During excavations, different facets of this legendary city were gradually revealed by archaeologists' shovels, from architectural structures to frescoes and jewels, and even "freshly" baked bread.

"Love, luxury, and beauty are all metaphysical themes," says Massimo Ambrosetti, Italian ambassador to China. "But when you have an

exhibition with these themes as the main thread, we recognize the importance of culture and arts in our life. ... This exhibition also reminds us of the significance of exchange among ancient civilizations, like Italy and China."

#### A bigger picture

The ongoing exhibition in Beijing is the second leg of its Chinese tour after its debut in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

In July, a second exhibition, *Masterpieces from the National Archaeological Museum of Naples*, lifted its curtain at the China World Art Museum in Beijing, with a display of

69 artifacts. As one of the world's first museums to open to the public, it now leads a new wave of exchange between cultural heritage sectors in China and Italy.

"Museums should better benefit the development of local communities," Paolo Giulierini, director of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, said at the 2023 Beijing Culture Forum last month. "Our museum tries to tell people that Western perspectives cannot be imposed. Instead, it can be a place for different cultures to exchange ideas. Mutual understanding of each other's cultures can build a more inclusive world."

Between 2018 and 2019, *Mortals and Immortals: The Treasures of Sichuan in Ancient China* toured Italy, highlighting the 3,000-year-old Sanxingdui Culture, known for its exotic-looking bronze ware, and other key ancient sites in the province. The National Archaeological Museum of Naples was its first Italian port of call.

Liu Shuguang, head of the Chinese Museums Association, who once worked on the archaeological site at Pompeii as a visiting scholar, said at the Beijing Culture Forum that the National Archaeological Museum of Naples and other smaller archaeological museums across the city and the Pompeii area can be a source of inspiration for Chinese cities.

He says that better links can be built between a city's overall development and the role of museums in promoting local history and culture.

According to Federico Antonelli, director of the Italian Institute of Culture in Beijing, collaboration between the Chinese and Italian cultural heritage sectors will benefit many fields.

Closer cooperation in cultural heritage conservation, more exchange exhibitions and joint archaeological work in places home to ancient civilizations could also be part of upcoming programs, given Italy's deep experience of international archaeology and China's rapid development in the field.

"We've seen cooperation between the two countries, and not only at the national level," Antonelli says. "It has expanded to many provincial-level institutions, and stone relic restoration in particular interests experts on both sides. The ongoing exhibition also showcases achievements in that area."

Since 2017, a Sino-Italian laboratory has been helping conserve the Dazu Rock Carvings, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Chongqing. Separately, a bilateral symposium was held in Leshan, Sichuan province, in July on possible cooperation on the Leshan Giant Buddha, another World Heritage Site.

Near the exit of the exhibition at the National Museum of Classic Books, a plaster cast of a young woman is on display. She was discovered in Pompeii, and while her body was incinerated by the blast, its outline was preserved in the hot volcanic ash that covered her. She was found on the ground, quiet but powerful, and her presence touches the heart and moves the imagination.

The individual pieces of projects like this exhibition may also combine to create a grand picture of the historic exchange between China and Italy. Rising from the sands of time, examples of their respective ancient glories and vicissitudes, they point toward a bright horizon ahead.

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# CULTURE



**Left:** Visitors attend *The Great Silk Road World Heritage Exhibition* at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum in Hachioji, Tokyo, on Oct 8. It is the first large-scale exhibition with the Silk Road as its theme to be held outside of China since 2014. **Right:** The exhibition features a selection of 237 precious artifacts related to the Silk Road from 27 major museums and academies in China, including those in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Dunhuang, Gansu province. PHOTOS BY KANG DI / FOR CHINA DAILY



## Jiangmen's global role celebrated with key event

By WANG QIAN  
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Highlighting the culture and history of the ancestral home of many overseas Chinese — Jiangmen in Guangdong province, *An Ecstatic Encounter With Jiangmen in Beijing*, opened as a monthly theme at the Overseas Chinese History Museum of China on Oct 17.

Consisting of two exhibitions and the film *Lingering Dream of the Homeland*, the event will run until next month. As home to more than 5.3 million Chinese migrants now living in 145 countries and regions, Jiangmen is known as one of the biggest cradles of Chinese migration.

"Over the course of the month, we will try to tell the stories behind the close ties overseas Chinese have to the motherland, and the important role they played in the country's economy and development through multiple platforms and mediums," Chen Ji, head of Jiangmen's publicity department, said at the launching ceremony.

"We are telling the story of Jiangmen's most representative figure Liang Qichao (1873-1929), as well as the history behind the *Qiaopi* letters and the film, to visitors," Chen added.

*Qiaopi* are documents including letters, reports, account books and remittance receipts that grew out of the communication between Chinese emigrants and their families back home. In 2013, a corpus of 160,000 such letters, some 50,000 of which were from Jiangmen, was added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register.

"Using these firsthand records of the lives and activities of overseas Chinese, we will try to explore the relationship between the letters and the development of the country and of the Communist Party of China," Chen says, adding that the exhibition has widened the discussion of the story of Chinese emigrants and their role in the country's modern economic and political prosperity.

In a letter written in 1948, Situ Meitang (1868-1955) said he believed that tomorrow would be better than today.

Situ's granddaughter, Situ Yuegui knows about her grandfather's strong emotional attachments to his homeland.

"Grandpa thought about the motherland all his life, and he often said, 'Without a country, there is no home,'" Situ Yuegui says.

At the exhibition, visitors can scan QR codes next to the letters to find out more about the people and stories behind them.

As this year marks the 150th anniversary of Liang Qichao's birth, the second exhibition pays homage to his legacy. Born in Jiangmen, Liang was a renowned intellectual, politician, historian and educator, who is seen as one of the flag carriers for modernization.

Displaying more than 100 items, including manuscripts, personal belongings and books, as well as photos, the exhibition tells the story of the patriotic historical figure and his family, says Ning Yi, vice-president of the Overseas Chinese History Museum of China.

The exhibition focuses on Liang's life overseas after the failure of the political movement of 1898 that called for a constitutional monarchy. During the 14 years in Japan, he visited several other countries, including Canada and the United States.

A book commemorating the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the Kobe Chinese School caught the attention of Liang Hong, Liang Qichao's granddaughter. In May 1899, Liang Qichao gave a speech at the Institute of Chinese Assembly Hall in Kobe, emphasizing the importance of establishing overseas Chinese schools. The next year, the Kobe Chinese School was founded.

"I have visited the school and am glad to see that it still follows its mission to pass on Chinese culture," Liang Hong says.

Divided into four sections — Liang Qichao's days abroad, the newspapers he started, schools for overseas Chinese, and his family — Ning hopes the exhibition will allow visitors to understand his ideas and vision for modernization, which continue to inspire scholars today.

The monthlong event will also include interactive activities, such as a visitor passport stamping program, according to Ning.



As this year marks the 150th birth anniversary of Liang Qichao, an exhibition honoring his achievements is being held at the Overseas Chinese History Museum of China in Beijing. WANG QIAN / CHINA DAILY

## A route from history to the future

Silk Road exhibition in Japan provides a rare opportunity to reaffirm the significance of this cultural heritage, report **Jiang Xueqing** in Tokyo and **Wang Ru** in Beijing.



The items on display at the exhibition include gold and silver ornaments, bronze artifacts, ceramics, murals, paintings, textiles, and Buddhist scriptures and statues. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

**T**he Great Silk Road World Heritage Exhibition, currently being held in Japan, is the first large-scale event with the Silk Road as its theme held outside of China since "Silk Roads: the Routes Network of Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor" was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2014.

Hosted by the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, Art Exhibitions China and The Asahi Shimbun, a daily newspaper in Japan, the exhibition features a selection of 237 precious artifacts related to the Silk Road from 27 major museums and academies in China, including those in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region and Dunhuang, Gansu province.

Among the items on display are silver ornaments, bronze artifacts, ceramics, murals, paintings, textiles, and Buddhist scriptures and statues. Many of them are being publicly displayed in Japan for the first time. Of these, 45 pieces are designated as first-class national cultural relics in China.

"The Silk Road-themed exhibition is being held for the third time in Japan. It was previously held once in the 1990s and again in 2004. After a gap of 18 years, which is roughly a generation, we feel it is necessary to hold another exhibition with the Silk Road as the theme to reaffirm the significance of this cultural heritage," says Chen Jianzhong, president of the Kouzan Fine-arts Company, the exhibition planning partner.

In 2014, the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor, one of the major arteries of the historic route that opened up trade between China and the West, became the first stretch of the Silk Road to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The trans-boundary trading corridor, covering some 5,000 kilometers across China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, was in active use from the second century BC until the 16th century, connecting cities, peoples and cultures across Central Asia, according to UNESCO.

The Silk Road represents the exchange of goods and trans-boundary communication-based interactions between people, says Akira Gokita, managing director and senior executive curator of the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum in Hachioji, in the western part of Tokyo.

Daisaku Ikeda, the founder of the museum, advocated for "establishing a Silk Road of the mind". This exhibition not only displays the changes in people and goods in ancient times, but also hopes to establish a Silk Road in people's hearts and use it as a way to address some of the issues in modern society. If the exhibition can create a consciousness of seeking world peace and unity, it will be very gratifying, Gokita says.

"Through this exhibition, I have come to appreciate the broad-mindedness that the Silk Road embodies, the ability to accept and exchange various cultures, treating people of different races equally, and allowing for diversity and inclusiveness," he says, adding such broad-mindedness, diversity and inclusiveness are qualities that modern people should possess.

"I hope that when people think of the Silk Road, they don't see it as a distant, unrelated concept from far away, but rather as a spirit represented in everyone's heart. If people embrace the spirit of the Silk Road, it can become an opportunity for mutual exchange when addressing various social issues, promoting broader interactions and communication," he says.

The exhibition was originally scheduled for 2020 but was postponed for three years due to COVID-19.

Between 2018 and 2019, a team of Japanese and Chinese experts visited major museums in 11 provinces and autonomous regions in China to select artifacts. They conducted three research trips, each lasting about two weeks, covering a total distance of 20,000 kilometers.

Ensuring safety of the artifacts was another big challenge. According to Wang Zhuoran, a curator of the exhibition from Art Exhibitions China, the various exhibits include heavy sculptures and tiny decorations, each requiring different protection when people move, preserve and display them.

"As a result, we invested great patience in checking and recording the preservation and features of each exhibit, and trying to figure out ways of packaging and displaying that will protect the cultural relics and put them into practice with our Japanese colleagues. We have tried our best to reduce the risk of the artifacts being broken," says Wang.

During the preparation of this exhibition, whenever the Japanese experts saw the cultural artifacts, they couldn't help but think of the treasures preserved in Shosoin, the treasure house of Todaiji Temple in the city of Nara.

"The cultural artifacts in Shosoin and those from the Silk Road share many similarities, making us feel a sense of closeness and amazement. We believe that the cultural artifacts in Shosoin must have originated from the Silk Road. Through this exhibition, we aim to show the audience where these artistic treasures in Japan come from," Gokita says.

Hiroko Matsukawa, a 74-year-old woman living in the city of Akishima, visited the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region 10 years ago. She went to see the exhibition on Oct 3 and was amazed.

"European culture spread to Asia through the Silk Road and then made its way to Japan. I believe the reason Japanese culture is what it is today is that, in the past, China pioneered the Silk Road, which led to the transmission and continuity of culture," Matsukawa says.

Tomoko Fudeyasu, a resident of Yamana-shi prefecture, says she experienced the changing colors of different eras in China after viewing the exhibition.

"I was particularly impressed by the use of green in the exhibits. Furthermore, after seeing sculptures and other items on display, I felt the depth of the distinct cultures of each era. This exhibition has once again reminded me of the importance of communication between people and the significance of cultural heritage," Fudeyasu says.

Artifacts are evidence of civilization and it is important to let them speak, let them recount the history of the Silk Road, and allow the audience to grasp the spirit of the Silk Road through them, says Chen of the Kouzan Fine-arts Company.

These artifacts not only showcase the way of life along the Silk Road, but also reveal their cultural essence to the audience. For example, there is a gold cup, unearthed in Xinjiang, that has the shape of a Western goblet, but the decorative elements on the cup are entirely Chinese, reflecting the lifestyle of Chinese nomads and featuring Tang Dynasty (618-907) patterns.

"From this cup, we can see the importance of a fusion of multiple civilizations," says Chen.

The Tokyo Fuji Art Museum has previously collaborated with Chinese partners to host exhibitions with themes like "the Three Kingdoms" and "the Palace Museum", which attracted 1.01 million and 1.07 million visitors respectively. It is estimated that the ongoing exhibition will receive 800,000 to 1 million visitors.

The exhibition will be held at the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum until Dec 10 and is planned to tour other venues from January 2024 to February 2025, including the Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, the Tohoku History Museum, the Ehime Museum of Art, the Okayama Prefectural Museum of Art, and the Museum of Kyoto.

"Every time we host exhibitions related to traditional Chinese culture in Japan, they receive wide recognition. The Japanese audience deeply understands that hundreds or thousands of years ago, Japan and China had such a relationship, and the source of Japanese culture can actually be found in China. From the bottom of their hearts, they have an appreciation for China, which strengthens their feelings toward the country," Chen says.

Japan has been doing research on the Silk Road for a long time. Soka University has a Silk Road research center that has conducted extensive research and investigations related to the Silk Road. Many other universities in Japan also have Silk Road research institutes. Some specialize in excavating ancient relics and making new discoveries, while others excel in analyzing silk or studying existing artifacts, such as Buddhist statues, says Gokita of the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum.

In the 1980s, NHK, a Japanese public broadcaster, aired a television program about the Silk Road, which sparked interest among nonprofessionals in Japan. This created a wave of enthusiasm nationwide and brought Japanese people closer to the Silk Road, Gokita says.

"Some of the emerging Silk Road researchers at that time, through writing books and papers, elevated the study of the Silk Road in Japan to new heights. However, many of these researchers are now elderly, and it appears that the Silk Road research in Japan is in a period of transition from the old to the new generation," he says.

Wang Kaihao contributed to this story.

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LIFE

# Up close and personal

Smaller venues and productions are creating a more immersive experience for audiences, while still allowing the essence of traditional operas to shine, **Chen Nan** reports.

In a narrow lane about a kilometer away from the bustling commercial area of Xidan in downtown Beijing, where young people gather to dine at new restaurants and buy fashionable clothes, Star Theaters, a popular venue among drama fans, is a hub for audiences looking for smaller theatrical productions.

Behind its giant red door, it is home to three performance areas — each with a seating capacity of about 200. Pioneering theater talents try their bold ideas with a diversity of productions, allowing audiences to enjoy a fresh experience.

Now, Star Theaters is offering something old, yet experimental.

From October to November, the 10th Xiqu Opera Black Box Festival brings 21 performances covering nine kinds of traditional Chinese operas, such as Peking Opera, Kunqu Opera, Cantonese Opera and Qinqiang Opera.

“Traditional Chinese operas are ancient, mostly established centuries ago. Incorporating singing, poetry, acting, and martial arts, they are performed in local dialects, depending on where they originate, with librettos composed according to a strict set of rules that highlight form and rhyme,” says Zhou Long, artistic director of the organizing committee of the festival. “Works of traditional Chinese operas tell stories of history, society and daily life. Traditionally, stage settings and props are kept to a minimum.”

“During the past 10 years, some artists of traditional Chinese operas broke the frame of the old art forms, trying to present new and creative productions. The essence of traditional Chinese operas remains the same but they experimented by altering traditional conventions of space, movement, mood, tension, language, and other elements,” says Zhou.

On Oct 11, to unveil the month-long festival, eight award-winning actresses and actors of traditional Chinese operas gathered at Star Theaters to perform excerpts from classic pieces.

The following day, the festival premiered a one-act Peking Opera production, titled *Waiting*. Adapted from *Waiting for Godot*, Samuel Beckett’s classic play, the production was directed and performed by Peking Opera actor Liu Dake.

*Jingju*, also known as Peking Opera, was listed as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010.

Within 90 minutes, four Peking Opera actors played multiple roles, breaking down the barriers of the characters and raising a lot of philosophical questions.

The production is open-ended, unlike traditional works of the genre. Since the space of the theater is small, there is little distance between actors and the audience, allowing the actors to build a conversation with viewers.

According to Liu, who performs with the China National Peking Opera Company and specializes in *huailian* roles (literally translated as “painted face”, referring to actors



playing male roles with striking looks and high social position), the idea of adapting *Waiting for Godot* into a Peking Opera production has been in his mind for years. He didn’t figure out a way to present it onstage until he met Peking Opera actress Zheng Zirui, who is known for playing *laodan*, or older female roles.

“As the Beckett play’s title indicates, the central act is waiting, and one of the most salient aspects of the play is that nothing really seems to happen. That part inspired me, especially after we experienced the COVID-19 pandemic. It seemed that all of us were waiting for something,” says Liu.

From there, he started to adapt the play in early 2023 and with the support of three other performers, they finished the adaptation.

“Nearly all of the work was done in the rehearsal room. We improvised a lot, which is totally unlike the usual process of rehearsing a traditional Peking Opera,” recalls Liu, adding that because Zheng lived in France for years, she also added French to parts of the dialogue.

On Sunday, the production will be staged at the recently reopened Beijing People’s Theater.

Liu recalls that, back in 2005, he performed in a small production, titled *Hamlet — The Revenge of Prince Zidan*, adapted from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* by Shanghai Peking Opera Company. Along with the company, he traveled to Denmark to perform the Peking Opera production.

“That was the first time that I performed in such a small Peking Opera production. I had no idea what ‘small’ meant, only knowing that we had much fewer cast members and a simpler stage set. When



**From top:** One-act Peking Opera production, titled *Waiting*, directed, written and performed by Peking Opera actor Liu Dake, is staged during the 10th Xiqu Opera Black Box Festival in Beijing on Oct 12; a scene from Xiju Opera production *Red Bean* presented by the Wuxi Xiju Opera Theater, which was staged in Beijing on Tuesday and Wednesday. PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY Eight award-winning actors and actresses of traditional Chinese operas take a bow during the event in Beijing on Oct 11. ZOU HONG / CHINA DAILY

we performed in Denmark, the applause from the audience was very warm, despite the language barrier,” recalls Liu.

Since then, Liu has been performing in more small Peking Opera productions, such as *Faust* based on Goethe’s masterpiece with the same

title, which was coproduced by the China National Peking Opera Company and the Italian Emilia Romagna Theatre Foundation in 2015, and his one-man show based on Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*.

“With a smaller cast and team, simpler stage sets and costumes, those productions bring lots of challenges for artists of traditional Chinese operas. The idea is bold but the root remains the same,” says Liu.

According to Yang Fengyi, artistic director and head of the Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre, smaller theatrical productions of traditional Chinese operas encourage directors, scriptwriters and performers to help the audience to change their attitudes and aesthetic judgments about the old art forms.

She also mentions *Ma Qian Po Shui*, the first Peking Opera show staged at a small theater, which was directed by Zhang Manjun and premiered in 2000 by the Jingju Theatre Company of Beijing.

“Now, after decades-long development, making smaller productions has become a popular movement among Chinese theaters of traditional operas, as a way to attract new audiences and a platform to offer opportunities to young talent.”

*Red Bean*, a new production by Wuxi Xiju Opera Theater, was scheduled to be staged during the festival, on Tuesday and Wednesday, as the first small theatrical production of Xiju Opera, a local opera form of Wuxi, Jiangsu province, with a history dating back to the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Four actors and actresses from Wuxi Xiju Opera Theater played six characters in the production, which tells a tragic love story between a prince, Xiao Tong, during the South-

ern and Northern Dynasties (420-581) and a beautiful woman named Hui Ru.

One of the performers in the new production is Cai Yu, an award-winning Xiju Opera actress who heads the Wuxi Xiju Opera Theater. With a history going back to the 1950s, the theater decided to put on its first small production, and invited An Fengying to be the director.

“The theater has been devoted to preserving and keeping Xiju Opera alive, like many other theaters of traditional Chinese operas in the country. We want to attract a younger audience, so we decided to develop our first small production,” says Cai.

“In Chinese culture, the red bean symbolizes romance between lovers. The story of *Red Bean* displays the beautiful singing and acting of Xiju Opera,” she adds, noting that one of the performers is Xiju Opera actor Wang Ziyu, whose grandfather, Wang Binbin (1921-2008), was known as one of the leading actors of Xiju Opera. His singing style, known as *binbin qiang*, has been inherited by his son, Wang Jianwei, and now his grandson, Wang Ziyu.

Besides Xiju Opera, Wang Ziyu also learned Kunqu Opera — one of the oldest existing forms of traditional Chinese operas, with a history of more than 600 years.

“Wang Ziyu plays the role of the prince and the emperor. He switched between the two totally different characters within seconds onstage, which presented great challenges. There are two performers onstage without any lines,” says An, who talks about the experimental elements featured in the production. “Though it is a tragic love story, the stage set is beautifully decorated with mirrors, which is something rarely seen in Xiju Opera productions.”

Over a decade ago, An worked with Chinese theater director Li Liuyi, playing in Li’s small theater productions, such as a trilogy portraying three female heroes, Hua Mulan, Mu Guiying and Liang Hongyu.

As she recalls, the experience allowed her to get to know small theaters, where new works were made for innovative live art.

*Red Bean* is An’s first production for such venues. “It has strong emotions. I wanted to disrupt the relationship between audience and performer,” says An, adding that, for actors and actresses, it is challenging to perform at such venues because all the performers’ movements can be seen clearly by the audience.

According to a 2015 survey, there were 348 forms of traditional Chinese opera, a decline of about 60 from 1999.

“During the past 10 years, small theaters have made a great contribution to attracting a younger audience. It’s true that traditional art forms are fighting to survive. We are glad to have such venues to help pave the way for old art forms to find new life,” she says.

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## Show unearths cultural depth of folk songs

By XING WEN  
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Nearly a century ago, Giacomo Puccini’s *Turandot* introduced the world to Chinese folk song *Jasmine Flower*.

Since then, this music piece, rich with oriental charm, captivating melodies and graceful lyrics, has made appearances at numerous international events.

It transcended cultural barriers, touching the hearts of audiences worldwide and showcasing the beauty of Chinese folk songs.

Recently, China Media Group produced a musical program called *Chinese Folk Song Gala*, which shows how the music piece, originally hailing from the Jiangnan region — the areas south of the Yangtze River — underwent local adaptations as it spread across different regions of China.

Performers from the Ningxia Hui autonomous region, Hebei, Liaoning, and Fujian provinces have creatively reinterpreted *Jasmine Flower*, displaying the diverse transformations and regional characteristics of this well-known folk song.

“Through the performances of the singers, we gain an insight into how the song has blossomed in various regions. Some have preserved its original lyrics, while localizing the melody. The majority have retained its tune but infused it with their unique regional styles,” analyzes Li Yuehong, a professor with the China Conservatory of Music.

“For example, when we listen to its rendition from Northeast China’s Liaoning province, one might instantly sense the influence of elements from Errenzhuan, a popular form of folk singing and dancing in the region. Similarly, in the case of the Fujian version, the influence of the local dialect

is apparent in the pronunciation of the lyrics, instantly transporting us to the region,” she adds.

The recently broadcast program, *Chinese Folk Song Gala*, embarks on a journey to unearth the cultural essence woven into traditional folk songs. It delves into the historical and contemporary aspects of folk music, showcasing the innovative evolution of China’s rich folk song heritage.

The show invited folk singers and enthusiasts from various regions who, through their performances, exemplify the diverse types and regional characteristics of folk songs.

“Our intention is to exemplify the innovative development of traditional culture by the younger generation. This year, in addition to presenting authentic folk songs, we place a strong emphasis on creatively reproducing folk songs. Our primary focus is on the fusion of folk songs across different genres, exploring connec-

tions between folk songs and traditional Chinese art forms, folk songs and rock music, and the interplay between folk songs and pop music,” says the show’s director, Hao Jing.

The program has collaborated with academic institutions and national performing arts groups to invite experts and scholars in folk music. These experts form an advisory panel, providing intellectual support for the adaptation of folk songs in the program.

Wang Yang, deputy director of the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music, notes that folk songs serve as authentic narratives of the lives and vibrant emotions of people from different periods and regions.

“Their distinct appeal stems from their capacity to mirror the geographic landscape, local tradition, social life and some other aspects of the regions where performers come from,” he says.

### Notice

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Property expropriation implementing unit: Shanghai Pudong No 3 Property Expropriation Service Firm Co Ltd

Shanghai Pudong No 3 Property Expropriation Service Firm Co Ltd  
Oct 24, 2023